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Innberetning v/ Mohi el-din Zarroug 12.7.1983

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dato

Further Test Excavation of stone age sites at Tjernagel.

The previous, test excavations of some of the Mesolithic sites at Tjernagel which has taken place during the first two weeks of June 1983 has shed som lights on the prehistoric occupation in the area concerned. The preliminary excavation of the material remains uncovered so far indicates that the area has been occupied during the early and the late Mesolithic-times. The cultural continuity between the above mentioned periods or traditions is reflected in the cultural remains which represent what might be designated as a transitional phase. Yet further excavations will be of great importance so that a clear picture of the post human behavior in the area under consideration can be reconstructed. At the moment, and until further archaeological exploration, the above mentioned statement will remain highly a matter of speculation.

This is a second report in connection with the archaeological exploration of some of the Mesolithic sites at Tjernagel given the archaeological importance of the area, it has been decided that further test excavation might shed more light on the nature of the prehistoric occupation in the area concerned. Four sites have been selected for the test. These were sites 2, 38, 32 and 6B. The examination of these sites was contucted in the period between the 21.06.83 to 10.07.83. A total of 15 squares (each being 1 m) were dug down to the bedrock. 10 squares from site 2, two squares

from site 38, two squares from site 32 and only one square from site 6B. In addition to the documentation of these squares which will be given below, two sections illustrating the soil composition of site 2 is supplemented.

Site 2.

Previous test excavations of this site were carried out during last June when three squares (sq-A, sq-B and sq-C). were tested . 10 squares were added during the last season of our fieldwork. Although the description of these squares can be seen from the two sections of the excavated area, a brief note within 1m square is offered below (see also Fig L) Sq.D.

This square consisted mainly of two layers: The turf (the uppermost layer) and a dark clay soil of plastic texture. The thickness of the former is 15 cm, while the latter being 25 cm. Artefacts (mainly of flint with few quarts, quartzite and rock crystal) were found in three architrary strate i.e. from 10 cm below the surface to the bottom i.e. 40 cm.

Sq.F.

The turf thickness of this square is 12 cm; below the turf is a dark clay soil of fine texture whose depth is 15 cm. Very few flint artefacts were found.

Sq.E.

The soil composition of this square is made up of: The turf (being 12 cm. in thickness). A dark clay soil of plastic texture (10 cm in depth) with a lence of 6 cm of light brown fine sand.
Artefacts mainly of flint were found from 10 cm. below the surface to the bottom i.e. 40 cm.

Sq.G.

The square consisted mainly of two layers: 1) The turf, being in the range between 10-15 cm in thickness and 2) a dark clay soil whose thickness varies from 10 to 15 cm.

Artefacts of flint (with very few quarts/quartzite) were found.

Sq.L.

The maximum depth of this square is 70 cm. The soil composition is made up of: an upper layer of turf whose thickness varies between 10-18 cm; below the turf is a black soil the depth of which ranges between 10-18 cm. The bottom layer is composed of dark brown clay soil of fine texture, the thickness of which is 35 cm.

In general the square has produced a relatively large number of lithic material the majority of which being what may be called waste flint. Three specimen of volcanic stone were also found.

Sq.M.

The depth of this square being 60 cm. The soil of this square is composed of: the turf (15 cm in thickness). Below the turf is a dark brown clay soil of fine texture whose thickness is 30 cm. Roots and fibers were found in this layer. The lowermost layer is a black clay of 10 cm in thickness.

A relatively high number of artefacts (flint and quartz) was found in 3 arbitrary stratum i.e. between 20 cm to 50 cm.

Sq.K.

This square consisted mainly of two layers: The turf whose thickness ranges between 10-15 cm. and a dark soil whose thickness is 15 cm.

Same 500 pieces of flint were found in one strata i.e. 10-20 cm. As it has been the case the majority of this lithic material is made up of waste flint and very few artefacts can be identified.

Sq.J.

As in sq.K this square is made up of an upper layer of turf whose tkickness ranges between 8-10 cm. and a dark clay soil of fine texture, the thickness of which being in the range between 10 to 15 cm.

Very few flint artefacts were found below 20 cm.
As a whole the site has produced a relatively high number

of lithic artefacts mainly of flint with few specimens of quartz and rock crystal. However, most of this material remains is made up of waste flint and a few artefacts can be identified. This way indicate that the site seem to have been a workshop site where flint and other raw-material were knapped. Given the presence of the micro-lithic tradition together with the appearance of quartz/ quartzite and rock crystal the site can be related to the late Mesolithic period.

A high frequency of the lithic remains was found in the northern part of the excavated area. Further excavation in this direction and to the north-east may provide more data.

Site 38.

Two squares (Sq-A and SqB) were excavated previously. Another two squares were added. There are squares C and Sq-D (See fig. 11), Sq.C.

This square is composed of two layers: The uppermost layer consisted of the turf whose thickness is 10 cm. Below the turf is a clay of sand soil whose thickness is 20 cm. This layer there is a lense of 20cm of ash.

A number of flint artefacts was found in two arbitrary stratum i.e. 10-20 cm and 20-30 cm.

Sq.D.

The soil composition as well as the depth of this square is typical to that of Sq.C mentioned above.
Very few finds (mainly flint) were made.
Further investigations may provide same information regarding the content of the site.

Site 32.

Two squares were dug in this site. The squares which are designated Sq.A and Sq.B are set three metres apart from east to west (see Fig. III)

Sq.A.

This square was dug in what appear to be a part of an old

shore or stream. This is indicated by the presence of water as well as a large number of stones. The stones are mostly kantrundet in shape. The square whose depth varies between 30 to 55 cm is made up of three layers: The uppermost layer consisted of a dark gray fine sand, the depth of which being 10 cm. Underlying this layer is a brown coars sand (with a lense of ash) the thickness of which is 10 cm. The lowermost layer is composed of gray sand of coarse texture whose thickness varies between 10-35 cm.

Less than 10 pieces of flint and few quartz were found in this square.

Sq.B.

The uppermost layer of this square is made up of the turf whose thickness ranges between 8-15 cm. Underlaying the turf is a clayey sand of fine texture and light gray colour, the depth of which being 15 cm. The lowermost layer is a coarse sand the thickness of which is 10 cm. However the souther wall of this square is made up of two layer, the turf and light gray sand of fine texture whose thickness is 52 cm. This layer is marked with patches of ashes.

A relatively large number of artefacts of what may be called macro flake industry is found throughout the arbitrary stratum i.e. from 10 cm to 50 cm. A few specimens of green quartzite we also found. Could it be a diagnostic feature comparable to the green stone? Site 32 was the first such site to produce a large number of this lithic industry and further excavation is needed so that the nature of the site can be indentified. The material uncovered from Sq.B indicate that the site may have been of an early Mesolithic tradition.

Site 6B.

Only one square is dug from this site. The square is located 1 m northwest of the wooden stick (the wooden stick is marked 35) and 2 m east of what appears to be a part of an open bog. The soil composition of this square is made up of an upper layer of turf whose thickness ranges between 07-17 cm. Underlying the turf is a black clayey

soil (rich with ash) the depth of which varies between 05-10 cm. Below is a layer of grey sand, being 07-10 cm in thickness. Underlying this layer is a brown gravel coarse sand whose thickness is 10 cm. The lowermost layer is made up of a mixture of coarse gray sand and gravel, the depth of which is 13 cm.

By far the square has produced a considerable number of lithic material which has not been found elsewhere from any of the excavated sites in the area. Some 800 specimens mainly of flint (with very few quartz) were found throughout the excavated arbitrary stratums i.e. from 0 to 50 cm. Although the majority of the artefacts is made up of micro-lithic tradition, the site retained an element of what might be called a macrolithic industry. Whether this material represents what appears to be a trasitional phase or stage from early to late Mesolithic or the site may have been devoted to tools knapping remains to be solved. It seems to be one of the interesting site and further excavations will be of great importance. At the present slate of our research it seems difficult to arrive at any interpretation regarding the nature of the site soncerned. What I have mentioned so far is based on a material which has been uncovered from only one square. This, to the best of my knowledge will not provide a sounding interpretation.

Further work has been carried on one of the uncompletely dug squares of site 6 (A) which lies to the north-east of site 6B. The excavation of the two arbitrary stratum i.e. 30-40 and 40-50 has revealed a number of flint artefacts which can be designated as a macrolithic industry. A comparative study of the lithic remains will probably shed more light as regard the relationship between site 6A and 6B if any.

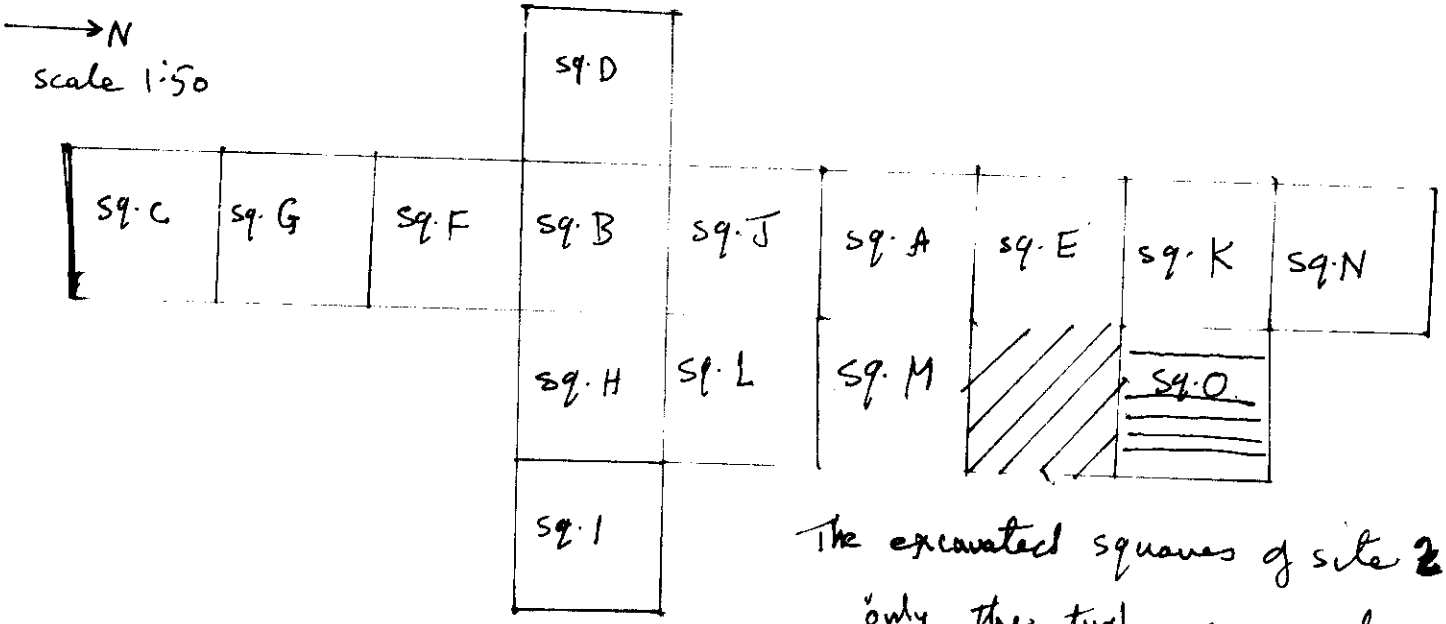
To conclude this report it is opponent that site 32, 6A and 6B together with site 2, one of the most important prehistoric occupation so far partly investigated. It is hoped that the systematic analysis of the lithic material from these sites will pridge the gap between the socalled Macro and Micro tradition. As I have said before that the cultural consistency seem to be rather strong. Therefore,

it appears that the excavations of these sites together with site 3 and site 34 (see my first report) will provide a coherent picture regarding the past human behavior in the area concerned from the early to the late Mesolithic occupation and perhaps to the later period of the Bronze or the early Iron age. This is indicated by the large mound whose excavations has not been completed.

Bergen, 12.07.1983

Mohi el-din Zarroug.

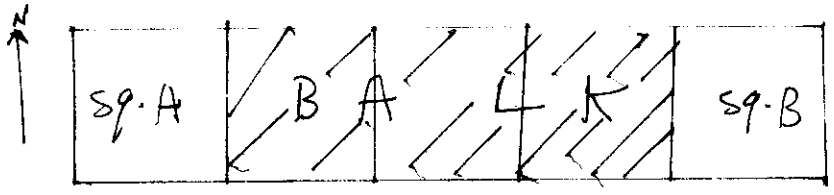
Fig. I



The excavated squares of site 2
only the turf was removed from sq. O

Fig. III

The excavated squares of site 32
x wooden stick, Location,



scale 1:50

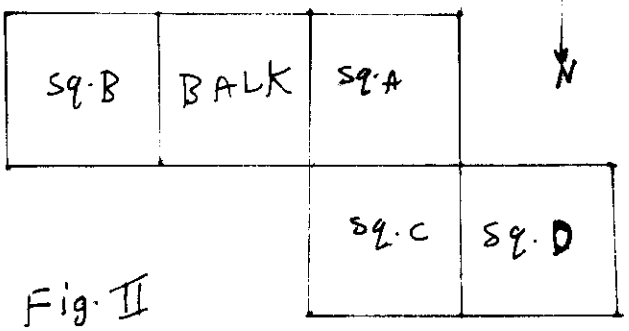


Fig. II

The excavated portion of site 38
sq. A and sq. B were dug during the first season