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Geological reconstruction of occupation phases. Tel el Facha archeological site- Kom W. Nile Delta - Egypt

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Introduction

The site Tel el Farcha is located on the Nile Delta and has been investigated by Polish-Egyptian mission for last ten years. During the time, excavation was performed on three big trenches i.e. western (Com W), central (Com C) and Eastern (Com E)

The aim of the publication is to present the reconstruction of phenomena observed at geo-archaeological profile of trench located at Com W at Tel el Farcha archaeological site.

Results

The reconstruction was performed by drawing of geo-archaeological profile in west wall of the mentioned trench. (Fig. 5). Basing on the drawing, the sequence of drawings showing the sequence of phenomena at the place from the c.a. 3900 B.C. until now, was constructed. The drawings starting from fig. 5 to fig. 1, starting from youngest to oldest sequence, were made, due to ablation of geo-archaeological layers. In consequence, one can seem, older and older stages of site occupation. On the other hand, it is possible to observe the phenomenon, starting from oldest phases i.e., when gezira was not occupied (Fig. 1), to the youngest one, i.e. to the moment of archaeological excavation and when the geo-archaeological profile presenting one of the trench walls was drown (Fig. 5).

Because of the proposed reconstruction, the sequence of the phenomenon will be described starting from oldest to youngest phases of occupation (Fig. 1- Fig. 5). It is necessary to stress, that the proposed reconstruction is performed exactly on and only for specific place of the site, because in other places of site sequence of phenomenon is often different. This shows, that correlation between archaeological trenches as well as general reconstruction of site functioning is extremely complex and needs more years of investigation.

The oldest described phases represents time directly after the occupation. When the top of gezira was covered with grass, it was inhabited by moluscas so typical for moderate climate (Fig. 1 - A). Skeletons of the Moluccas can be still found at the top part of gezira sands.

The first phase of human presence at the top of gezira is represented by geo-archaeological layers (Fig. 1- B) containing remains of human activity (small and rare fragments of pottery, charcoal etc.).

Next phase represents geo-archaeological layer with brewery and relics of other constructions (walls) built of dried bricks (Fig. 1 – C).

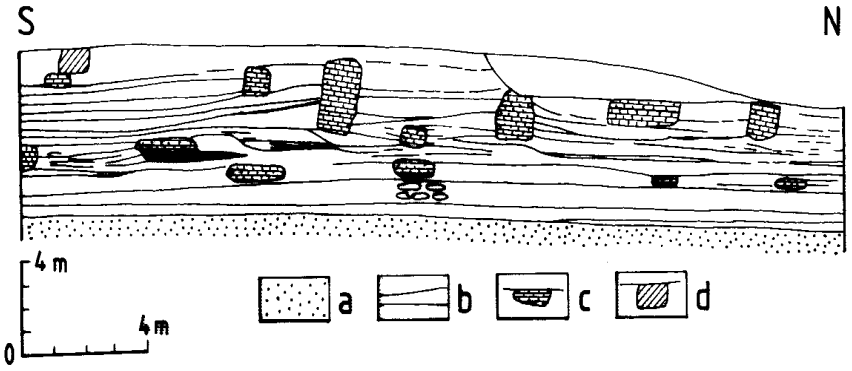

Fig. 5 Presents geo-archaeological profile of west wall of trench located at Com W. a - sands of gezira, b – geo - archaeological layers. c – damaged walls , d – walls build of dried bricks

Between the first and the second of the phases, one can see the break in occupation and phase of site destruction and erosion, when structures of the early construction is damaged and eroded. (Fig. 1- C – Fig. 2 - A)

Next phase of occupation is, it this part of Com W, represented by big walls i.e. construction of houses and other buildings. The objects are built of large, light, sandy bricks (Fig. 2 – B).

At the next mentioned stage, objects were damaged and destroyed practically up to the base (Fig. 1 – C). The time of erosion and break has not been determined so far, but it had to be relatively long. Maybe buildings were not damaged naturally by erosion, but by man.

Later, thick walls of solid objects were constructed over the eroded walls (Fig. 2 -C). They are better preserved in other places of site, but in the described location, they were strongly eroded during the next phase, i.e. time between stages Fig. 2 -C and F3-A.

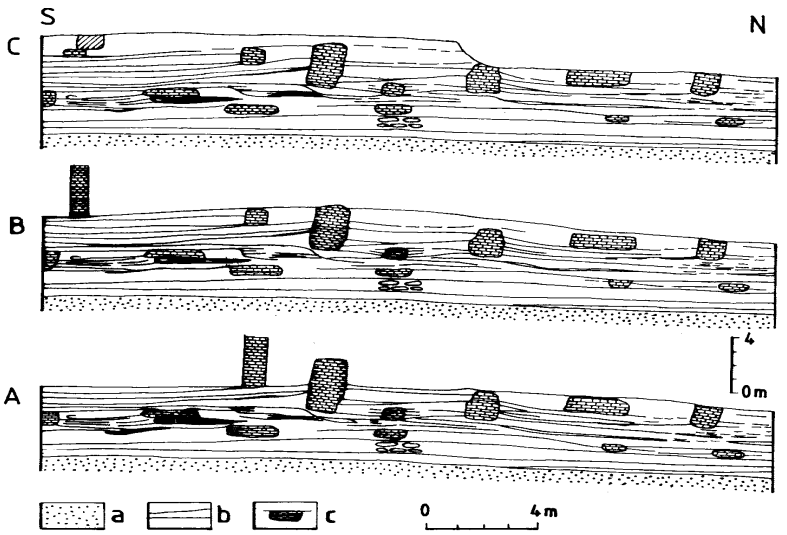

Fig. 4 Reconstruction of youngest phases of occupation, a - sands of gezira, b – archaeological layers. c – walls build of dried bricks.

After phase of destruction, new houses represented by walls built of dried bricks, appeared again (Fig. 3A.) This stage of occupation is continuous, which means that some buildings were damaged, while the other once were built (Fig. 3 - B,C). The new buildings were constructed over the older once, on new, ground surface (Fig 4 – A)

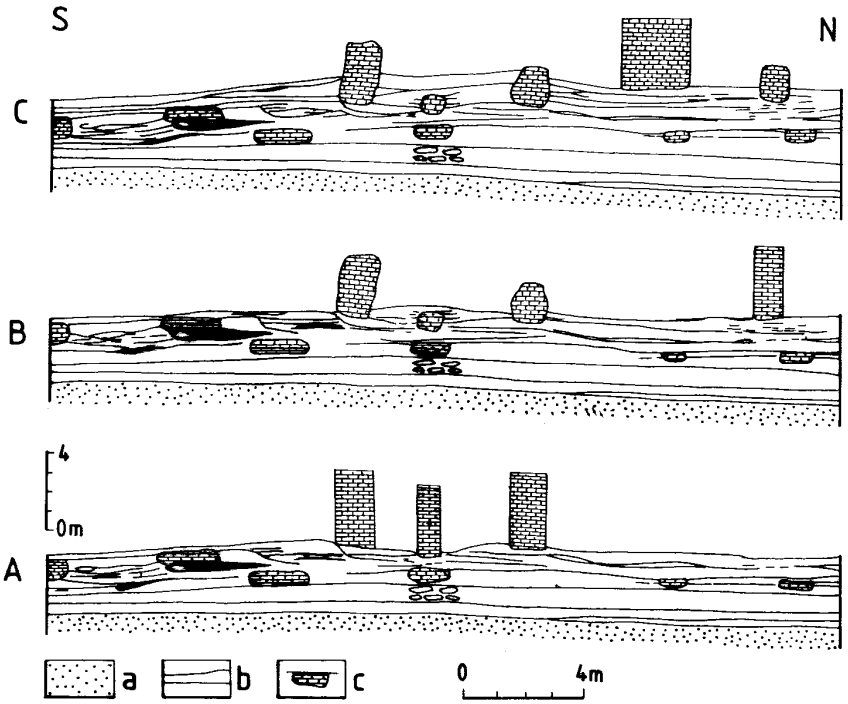

Fig. 3 Reconstruction of younger phases of occupation
a- sands of gezira, b – geo-archeological layers. c – walls build of dried bricks

After the phase showed at fig. 4 –A, one can see a break in occupation and the following phase of erosion, which age remains unknown. It was probably a relatively long time, because the entire morphological surface was at this time perfectly eroded and no old walls were seen over the ground (Fig. 4 – phase between A and B).

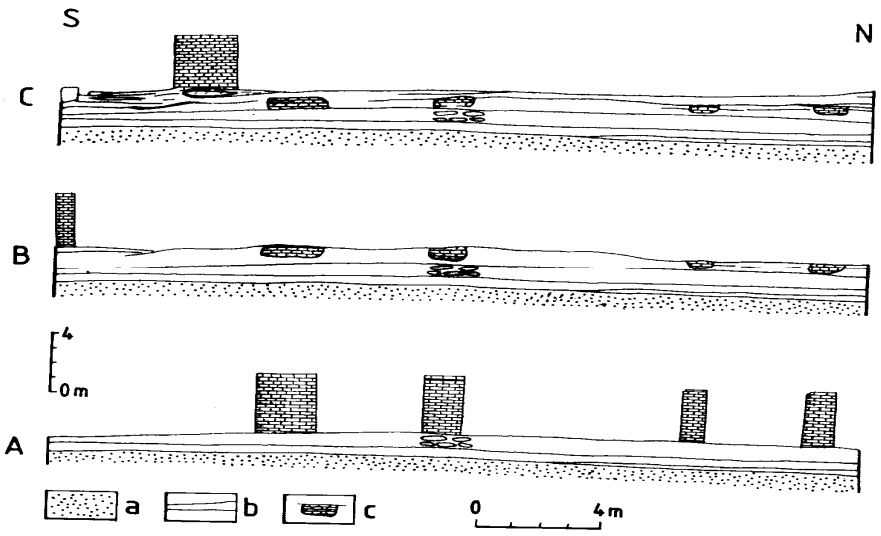

Fig. 2 Reconstruction of younger phases of occupation
a- sands of gezira, b – geo-archaeological layers, c – walls built of dried bricks

Then, the last occupation appeared (Fig. 4 – C). It is seen as rare, rather small architectonic objects built of dried bricks. The last phase represents the time between the end of last occupation and our excavation works. This, very long period, is seen at the described profile as a phase of erosion and accumulation. (Fig. 4 –C), when traces of digging are visible in some places, but in the other once, naturally formed layers occur, being a result of eolian activity.

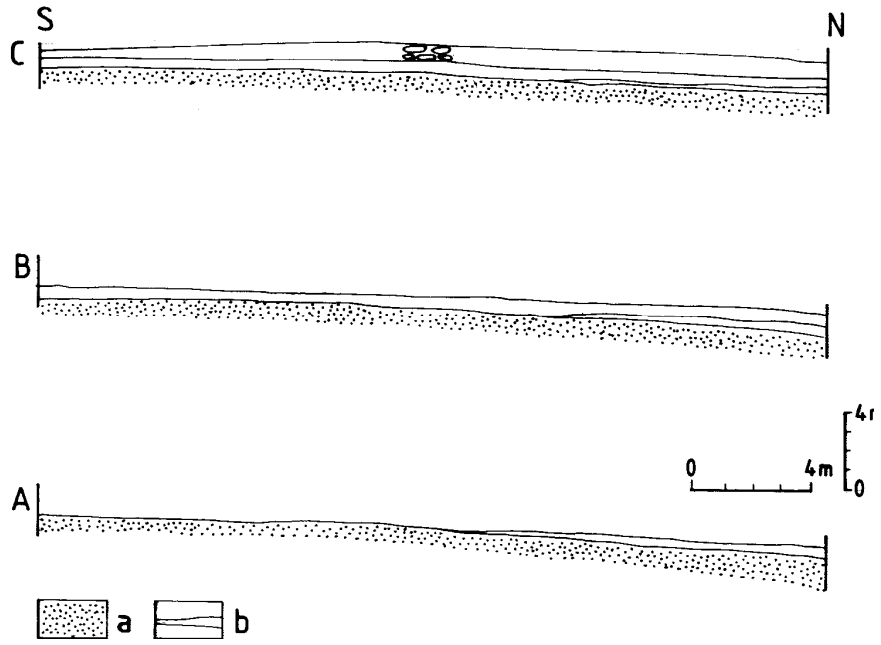

Fig. 1 Reconstruction of early phases of occupation
a- sands of gezira, b – geo-archaeological layers, c – walls build using dried bricks

Summary

Proposed reconstruction of phenomena of occupation and abundance of west part of Tel el Farcha Archaeological site show the complexity of history of the site. This complexity combined with other local phenomena makes reconstruction of side history very complicated.

On the other hand, one can see the proposed graphic method used in reconstruction and understanding the past useless.