

6_1_1_Introduction_to_the_experimental_programme_of_house-building_and_-burning

There is a long history in Cucuteni-Trypillia studies of the experimental construction of (generally smaller-than-life-size) 'Neolithic' houses, followed by their burning down to reproduce the conditions of burnt daub (the '*ploshchadka*') found during excavation (for review, see Burdo 2011). Our experiment sought to make contributions to four areas of the ongoing debate: (a) whether houses were burnt deliberately or not; (b) whether burning was used to aid the construction of houses (the so-called 'construction burning'); (c) estimating the quantities of timber used for construction and fuel for burning; and (d) matching the remains of the burnt experimental remains to features found during excavation of Trypillia houses. A vital stage in the last aim was to excavate the burnt remains of the experimental house, using recording systems similar to those used for Trypillia houses. As far as we are aware, this is the first experimental burning whose remains have been scientifically excavated and recorded. Two additional, smaller-scale experiments were conducted in Durham to investigate the possible use of construction burning.