

Kilise Tepe

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This year was our final season working at Kilise Tepe, although we shall no doubt be paying the occasional visit to the museum at Silifke to dot some i's and cross some t's. With a raft of outstanding questions resolved in the 2011 season, this summer we had nothing more than an intensive interrogation of two of our major stratigraphic cross-sections to complete on site, while our trusty workforce from Kışla village systematically continued the back-filling begun last year until, in the words of the collect, it was 'thoroughly finished'. With no touristic monuments to conserve, and the known propensity for some of the stone masonry to find its way into rather more recent structures in the vicinity, this seemed the best way to protect the site for the future, and henceforth visitors will be able to make out the areas of excavation but not the actual walls, except where they are visible in some of the vertical sections.



Site information board and site guard (Tuncay Korkmaz)

While the site was being mothballed, writing up the excavations and studying the finds from the last five seasons continued in the classrooms of the old school and under its pine trees in Kışla village in preparation for final publication which is being assembled by T. Emre Şerifoğlu (assistant director) for the Early and Middle Bronze Age, Nicholas Postgate (director) for the Late Bronze and Iron Age, and Mark Jackson (co-director) for the Hellenistic and Byzantine material, with Carlo Colantoni providing the architectural plans and sections and other digital expertise. Margaret O'Hea (University of Adelaide) completed her examination of all the glass, and the 2011 zoo-archaeological material was recorded by Julie Best and Jennifer Jones of the Cardiff Osteoarchaeological Research Group for inclusion with Peter Popkin's work on the 2007–2009 seasons. Naoise Mac Sweeney (University of Leicester) was able to complete her



The Central Strip sounding after backfilling

catalogue of all the pre-Classical small finds for the planned final publication, with the collaboration of Bob Miller, Franca Cole and Vicki Herring, who took care of the photography, conservation and illustration respectively. They also helped Mark Jackson to prepare the equivalent catalogue for the Byzantine finds in collaboration with Frances McIntosh who was located back at Newcastle University, where Tom Sutcliffe continued digitisation of the Byzantine archive. Long hours were also devoted to the ceramics of all periods: by Nazlı Evrim Şerifoğlu and Mark Jackson, who both accomplished remarkable reconstructions of jars from the beginning and end of our timespan respectively, by Christina Bouthillier (Cambridge University), who finalised her work on the Iron Age repertoire, and by Ekin Kozal (Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University), who continued her analysis of the Late Bronze Age ceramics from the North-West Building.

It was of course also the last season at Kışla for the finds – whether pottery, spindle whorls, bags of seeds or Byzantine coins. They were almost all stored in the plastic crates now familiar on almost every excavation in Turkey, and Caroline Steele and Susan Poll conducted a complete audit of all 286



Early Bronze Age jar restored by Nazlı Evrim Şerifoğlu



Byzantine jar reconstructed by Mark Jackson

crates to ensure that our database is up-to-date and accurate. On 27 August, escorted for the first part of the journey by the jandarma from Sarıkavak, the entire assemblage, together with ten items too large for a crate, was ferried down the valley to Silifke Museum and safely stacked in the depot which had been furnished with an upper storey and (much appreciated) air-conditioning in anticipation of its arrival. So our final season concluded smoothly, thanks in no small measure to the unfailing co-operation of the museum and its Director, İlham Öztürk. Many thanks to her, not only for 2012, but for all the years back to 1998, and to Yaşar Yılmaz, the Ministry representative from the Konya Museum, who was a most agreeable member of the team and gave us the right advice when needed and only then.

When we first worked at Kilise Tepe in 1994 it was as a joint project with the Silifke Museum because the site was thought to be endangered by the imminent construction of a hydro-electric barrage at Kayraktepe just downstream of Değirmendere on the Göksu. By the time we ceased in 1998 to publish, this danger had receded and when we resumed work in 2007 we were informed that there were no plans for the barrage. Now, however, the idea has resurfaced, and there is again a real possibility that in a few years' time the southern part of the Mut basin will find itself under water. Kilise Tepe itself lies too high to be affected, but on the opposite side of the river on much lower ground stands Çingentepe, the next most significant pre-Classical site so far identified between Silifke and Mut. Surface collections have shown that like Kilise Tepe it was occupied in the second and early first millennia BC. So, although our project at Kilise Tepe is now entering its publication phase, it would be very rewarding to see the results of rescue excavation at Çingentepe. Hence we are hoping that in years to come it will be possible for our assistant director, T. Emre Şerifoğlu, who is now running the Department of Archaeology at Bitlis Eren University, to survey the area and excavate there. With

this in mind and collaboration from the village we have resolved the problem of what to do with our well-used but mostly still serviceable dig equipment and furniture by storing it in the vicinity where it will be available for use across the river if needed.

Our work this year was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, which has also supported Carlo Colantoni as the project's research associate from 2010 to 2013. Sue Poll's contribution as the 'archivist' and web-site manager (see <http://www.kilisetepemcdonald.cam.ac.uk>) was enabled by a research assistance grant attached to Nicholas Postgate's Fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust and T. Emre Şerifoğlu's work on the Early and Middle Bronze Age at Kilise Tepe by a generous grant from the Mediterranean Archaeological Trust. We are all indebted to our universities at Bitlis, Cambridge, Çanakkale and Newcastle for their support in cash and kind. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism is to be thanked for regularly granting us the excavation permit, while in Silifke, the consistent support of the museum staff and their Director, İlham Öztürk, has been indispensable, and we are deeply grateful to them.

The project has benefited enormously by having its base in the attractive village of Kışla. For the use of the school premises and not least the shade of its pine trees we have been constantly grateful to the muhtar, Selçuk Kılınç, and our admirable crew of workmen are all recruited from the village, not to mention our site guard, Tuncay Korkmaz, who has been indispensable in so many capacities, and Mariye Korkmaz, whose cooking does wonders for morale. Just before Ramazan we had an enjoyable evening with village residents under the plane tree at the foot of the tepe, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the construction of the spring head which has provided us with life-saving shade on many a morning in July and August when the mercury was over 40°. We will all miss the village and its grand new football pitch, the ice-cream at the shop, the birds, the squirrels and not least our cheery workforce.



Crates being loaded for transport to Silifke Museum