

**TAYINAT ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT  
2017 SEASONAL REPORT**

[Not for Publication]

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## INTRODUCTION

The Tayinat Archaeological Project (TAP) conducted its thirteenth season of field research at Tell Tayinat between June 15 and August 13, 2017. The field excavations were followed by two months of laboratory analysis and research, conducted between September 4 and November 6, 2017, in preparation of reports and conference presentations on the results of the 2017 season.

The 2017 TAP senior staff consisted of Dr. Timothy Harrison (Project Director), Dr. Elif Denel (Assistant Director and Field 7 Operations), Dr. Stephen Batiuk (Senior Field Archaeologist), and Dr. Lynn Welton (Field 1 Operations). The project was assisted by Dr. Mark Weeden (Epigrapher), Doğa Karakaya (Archaeobotanical Specialist), Julie Unruh (Conservator), Stanley Klassen (Laboratory Manager), and Dr. Fiona Haughey (Artifact Illustrator and Registrar). The project was also assisted by three archaeological specialists (Matthew Harpster, Lawrence Jackson Hughes, and James Osborne), and two archaeology students (Gisem Köylü and Rana Zaher). Ali Çelikay served as government representative on behalf of the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums.

The primary objectives of the 2017 TAP field season were as follows: (1) to conduct excavations in Fields 1 and 7 (**Resim 1**) aimed at clarifying important stratigraphic questions resulting from the Phase Two (2011-2016) TAP investigations, and in preparation for large scale excavations anticipated in Phase Three (2017-2021) of TAP; (2) to continue the ‘soft capping’ conservation program for the monumental mudbrick architecture on the Neo-Hittite citadel, in particular Temple II (Field 1), as part of the planned archaeological park, but also to consolidate and stabilize the west balk (or section) of Field 1, and the sections around Temple XVI (Field 2); (3) to continue ongoing analyses of the artifact assemblages recovered from previous field

seasons in Fields 1, 2, and 7; and (4) to continue the development of the Tayinat Archaeological Park.

### **FIELD 1 EXCAVATIONS (L. WELTON)**

The 2017 excavations in Field 1 (**Resim 1**) were concentrated in Square G4.55, and were aimed primarily at resolving stratigraphic questions from earlier seasons of excavation. More limited investigations were also conducted in Squares G4.54/55 and G4.64/65 (primarily balk stabilization) and G4.56.

#### **Square G4.55 (L. Welton, S.Klassen and G. Köylü)**

The primary goals for the 2017 season were to clarify remaining questions about the construction sequence and stratigraphy associated with the large building in FP8b, and to remove it in an attempt to delineate the architecture that had begun to appear during cleaning in the 2015 season in the bottom of Room 1 in G4.55, described here as FP10.

#### ***FP8b: Later Architectural Phase***

A major operation in G4.55 during the 2017 season was the removal of Walls 210 and 262 (**Resim 2**), which were extending northward into the central part of the square from the south. Cleaning of the sections of these walls in the area of the doorway between Rooms 1 and 2 revealed two walls, with a narrow space between them filled with mudbrick fill. Wall 210 was revealed to be partially collapsed, while Wall 262 was comparatively intact.

Another key area addressed during the 2017 season was the western side of Square G4.55, where the western wall of Room 1 (Wall 213/266) had been left in place, and all fill in the room(s) to the west of this wall had also been left in place. The E-W Wall 214 had been identified a number of seasons ago, and the fill to the north of this wall, in the northwest corner of the square, was designated as Room 3. Sections cut through the walls of Room 3 revealed that

there was a doorway between Wall 266 and Wall 214. The fill in Room 3 was removed as Loci 319, 320, and 321.

Wall 214 was removed after the fill associated with Room 3 was excavated. This led to the identification of a second wall travelling in an east-west direction, parallel to Wall 214, immediately to its south (**Resim 2**). This wall was designated Wall 325, and represents (with Wall 214) an example of a double-wall construction; this wall was subsequently removed. In addition, excavation revealed that, as with other walls in the area, Wall 213 represents a double wall construction, and there were two separate but parallel walls immediately next to each other. Thus, the new second wall (the westernmost wall of the parallel constructions) was assigned to Wall 327. The small remaining amount of fill was removed from the space defined by Walls 325 and 327, representing the northeastern portion of a space designated as Room 4. The fill in Room 4 was then removed as Loci 326, 328 and 329. Upon the removal of this fill, a bench was observed sealing against Walls 325 and 327, wrapping around the northeastern corner of Room 4 (**Resim 3**). This bench extends into the section in both directions, so its extent within the room remains unclear. This bench was designated Installation Locus 331.

The 2017 season has clarified a great deal about the construction techniques and construction sequence associated with Field Phase 8b. In advance of this season, we already knew of the use of a double wall construction technique in some areas of Square G4.55. This included the area between Rooms 1 and 2, where Walls 210 and 262 were known to run immediately parallel to each other. It was also suspected in some areas in the southern part of the square, where parallel east-west walls had been suggested to exist for Walls 211, 265, 212 and 213, but have not yet been confirmed. This now seems more likely, but needs to be examined further in 2018 through the removal of these southern walls in G4.55. The 2017 excavations thus confirmed that this double-wall construction technique was used consistently throughout the

building complex; this construction technique needs to be researched more thoroughly for parallels.

***FP10: Earlier Architectural Phase***

The exact wall lines of the architecture underlying the buildings of FP8b and the nature of the associated building(s?) cannot yet be fully articulated. However, at this point, it would appear that there were two separate buildings: one largely constructed with white mudbrick, located in the western and central areas of Square G4.55, and a second constructed with red mudbricks, located in the eastern portion of Square G4.55 and continuing into G4.56 (**Resim 2**). These will henceforth be referred to as the “White Building” and the “Red Building”, respectively.

In the Red Building, two walls can be clearly identified in Square G4.55, one travelling north-south (Wall 312), and the second travelling east-west (Wall 316) (**Resim 4**). Both of these walls are built from red mudbricks that are quite crumbly because they appear to have been heavily burned. Two lines fairly consistently visible are associated with each wall face: the first appears to represent a true wall face, commonly plastered, and the second appears to represent the extent of the soft, crumbly red material that may represent destruction debris associated with the wall (generally located ca. 25-30 cm from the plastered wall face). Thus far, no plaster has been identified in association with the White Building, so this may be a feature particularly associated with the Red Building. Two rooms would therefore appear to be associated with the Red Building: one room located to the north-east of these two walls, and the second (possibly) to the south-east.

The White Building lies to the west of the Red Building. Much of the architecture associated with this building was uncovered in 2015, and little additional information was gained in 2017.

### **Square G4.56 (L. Welton and S. Hughes)**

Limited, exploratory investigations were also conducted in G4.56 (**Resim 1**), and some attention was paid to the balks in the square. One of the largest operations involved removal of the pillar of earth supporting the few remaining *in situ* steps in the entrance to Temple II (Locus 3). These steps were left in place in 2004 when they were first rediscovered, and a pillar of soil has remained beneath them as support. This pillar has become increasingly unstable, and it was decided to remove it as part of an effort to stabilize the north balk of the square.

A small probe was also opened in the bottom of Room A (in the westernmost portion of the square), which revealed the continuation of Wall G4.55:316 in the central part of Room A, and possibly continuing eastward under Wall G4.56:275. This E-W wall was assigned Wall 351 (=G4.55: 316) (**Resim 5**). Also observable was a north-south wall proceeding south from Wall 351, which was designated Wall 352. This wall may form the eastern edge of the southern of the two rooms associated with the Red Building in G4.55. However, it seems to end before reaching the north face of Wall 302 toward the south, which may suggest the presence of a doorway in the eastern side of this room. Notably, the walls in this area are not nearly as red as they are in Square G4.55, and they seem significantly less burned than the walls to the west, suggesting that the fire that burned Red Building may have been localized. Importantly, however, this extension also indicates that the Red Building continues into G4.56.

### **Squares G4.54/55 and G4.64/65 Balk Operations (see further below)**

The final operation conducted in Field 1 in 2017 involved the stabilization of the balks along the western side of Squares G4.55 and G4.65, due to the constant problem of collapse. The documentation of this balk cleaning and stabilization operation was recorded as part of Squares G4.54 and G4.64 respectively.

### **FIELD 7 EXCAVATIONS (E. DENEL)**

The primary objective of the 2017 season in Field 7 (**Resim 1**) was to continue to clarify the archaeological context for the recently discovered sculptures, and in particular their stratigraphic relationship to the proposed citadel gate complex in this area. The investigations were focused primarily in the northern part of Field 7, in the immediate vicinity of the discovery spots of the lion sculpture, the Suppiluliuma statue, and winged bull and sphinx column base. The excavations were concentrated in two areas: Squares G4.47/57 and G4.48/58, just to the south of Temple XVI (**Resim 6 and 7**).

#### **Square G4.47 and G4.57 (T. Harrison and R. Zaher)**

Excavations were initiated in Square G4.57 (**Resim 7 and 8**) in part due to concerns about the stability of the east balk of Square G4.56 in Field 1 to the west, much of which had begun to collapse as a result of heavy winter rains in recent years. Excavations had also demonstrated that this area was particularly unstable due to a deep and expansive north-south trench that had been cut through the western part of the square during the University of Chicago's Syrian-Hittite Expedition excavations in the 1930s. Despite these pragmatic concerns, Square G4.57 also presented an important opportunity to establish stratigraphic links between Fields 1 and 7, and thereby help to resolve critical questions regarding the stratigraphic relationships between the largely Iron I levels preserved in Field 1, to the west, and the Iron II remains in Field 7 to the east.

The excavations were focused in the northern part of the square, in an area encompassing approximately 10 m (E-W) X 5 m (N-S), factoring in balks on the north and east; the structural instability of the western part of the square precluded the possibility of a west balk. Toward the end of the season, a small probe was extended northward from the northeast corner of the square into Square G4.47 (**Resim 9**). In all, the 2017 excavations revealed a recently deposited 'topsoil' layer of approximately 50 cm depth, the result of multiple leveling efforts by bulldozer activity

since the 1930s excavations, and the heavily disturbed remains of what appears to be the western portion of the Iron II/III citadel gate.

Remarkably, within this broken earthen matrix excavations revealed the deposited head and upper torso of a monumental stone female human figure (**Resim 10**). The statue was found lying face down, in a roughly westward direction, on a thick bed of broken, shard-like fragments and chips of basalt (**Resim 11**). The head and upper torso of the female figure were recovered largely intact, although her face and chest had been intentionally—possibly ritually—defaced in antiquity (**Resim 12 and 13**). Her preserved remains, made of basalt, measure 1.1 m in length and .7 m in width, suggesting a length of more than three meters for her full figure; her lower body is missing. The figure's striking features include a ring of curls that protrude from beneath a shawl that covers her head, shoulders and back. Broken portions of her eye sockets, nose and face were recovered from the bed of basalt chips, but also fragments of other sculptures, likely including remains from the sculptures previously found deposited elsewhere within the gate area, including the head of the Neo-Hittite King Suppiluliuma (ca. early 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE) discovered in 2012, inferring an elaborate process of deposition for these monumental sculptures.

The identity of the female figure, or 'Lady of Tayinat', has not yet been determined. It is possible that she is a representation of Kubaba, divine mother of the gods of ancient Anatolia. However, there are also stylistic indications that the statue represents a human figure, possibly the wife of Suppiluliuma, or—more intriguingly—a person named Kupapiyas, wife (or possibly the mother) of Taita, the presumed dynastic founder of ancient Tayinat. Two Hieroglyphic Luwian-inscribed stelae found near Hama in Syria more than half a century ago provide a tantalizing description of this remarkable woman, who lived for more than 100 years, we are told, and appears to have been a prominent matriarchal figure in the early part of the first



millennium BCE. Despite her apparent prominence, these stelae preserve the only extent memory of Kupapiyas in the historical record.

Immediately to the south/southwest of the female statue, excavations revealed the heavily disturbed remains of a wall-like feature (**Resim 9**), made of three large roughly hewn limestone blocks, or orthostats, totaling approximately 2.4 m in length, and oriented in a slightly northwest to southeast direction. Although separated by several meters, this wall line aligns almost perfectly with the northern ‘cornerstone’ of the limestone structure in Square G4.58 to the east (**Resim 7**). The stone blocks had been heavily damaged by bulldozing activity, with the ‘teeth’ marks of a bulldozer plow visible in places. A surface densely covered with pottery sealed against the north face of this structure, and a possible pebble and white plaster surface, or deposit (?), extended to the south of the structure, although this ‘surface’ did not seal directly against it. The sherd-covered northern surface appeared to have been cut by the pit into which the female statue had been deposited. The G4.57 excavations also produced a significant concentration of Hieroglyphic Luwian-inscribed basalt fragments (some resembling the Tayinat Inscription 2 stela) in a cluster immediately to the east of this white plaster deposit.

Despite the wealth of material remains, the largely isolated features uncovered in Square G4.57 had been heavily damaged by the recent bulldozing activity, rendering it very difficult to determine their structural layout and stratigraphic relationships. Nevertheless, collectively, they appear to have formed part of the western extent of the Iron II/III citadel gate complex better preserved in Squares G4.58 and G4.59 to the east, presumably part of its terminal (Iron III) phase, with the deposition of the female statue occurring at some point during (or following?) this phase. A probe excavated along the east balk of G4.57 in the final days of the season began to uncover mudbrick walls from a structure sealed by this gate complex, with the associated pottery dating primarily to the Late Iron I/Early Iron II.

**Square G4.48 and G4.58 (E. Denel and M. Harpster)**

The 2017 excavations in Squares G4.48 and G.49 were focused in the southern parts of these two squares, on the north edge of Field 7 (**Resim 1 and 7**), and immediately to the south of Temple XVI in Field 2. The primary aim of the excavations was to clarify the stratigraphic relationships of the fragmentary architecture and the depositional context/s of the previously excavated statues in Field 7.

The excavations in Square G4.48 were carried out along the southern edge of the square in two successive probes, the first along the square balk line, and the second immediately adjacent it to the north. This northern extension was cut intentionally into the stone pavement that extends south of Temple XVI (see **Resim 7**) in order to establish direct stratigraphic links between the architectural complex in Square G4.58, including the deposited statues, and the Temple XVI complex. The G4.48 excavations revealed a succession of surfaces that contained large concentrations of flat-lying pottery and evidence of domestic activity, including an oven or hearth, grinding stones, a wealth of fauna and other evidence of food preparation, as well as clay stoppers, loom weights and spatulas, in all, totaling almost 50 small finds. These superimposed surfaces appear to be sandwiched stratigraphically between the so-called gate complex to the south in Square G4.58 and the stone pavement associated with Temple XVI to the north. Further excavations will be needed to complete this important Iron II/III stratigraphic sequence.

The G4.49 excavations extended the G4.48 probe to the east, and resulted in an exposure 2.5 m (E-W) x 4.8 m (N-S) in size along the southern edge of the square. The area had been disturbed significantly by recent bulldozing activity. Excavations, nevertheless, delineated four discernable superimposed stratigraphic units, the earliest of which consisted of an isolated patch of stone pavement. Time constraints precluded the possibility of determining whether this feature formed part of a larger complex.

## **MUDBRICK ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION (S. BATIUK)**

The 2017 site conservation program at Tayinat focused on repairing the work of previous seasons, and balk stabilization. These included repairs to the exterior north face of Temple XVI, and the eastern face of Temple II, both of which had suffered minor collapse, and the stabilization of the north, west and east balks enclosing Temple XVI. Additionally, the north face of Temple II required re-plastering, as it had weathered poorly during the winter rains.

The largest conservation project of the 2017 season was the stabilization of the balks created by the deep sounding in Field 1 (**Resim 1 and 6**). In particular, the west balk in Field 1 (Squares G4.55 and G4.65) had suffered severe erosion, despite having been covered with geotextile during each offseason. In an effort to stabilize the west balk, a new balk line was established further to the west, and a step, approximately 1 m in height and varying between 30 cm and 70 cm in width, was created, and the lower part of the balk face straightened. This trimming of the balk also enabled the entire west section of Field 1 to be redrawn, resulting in a more accurate documentation of the west balk, and the resolution of a number of important stratigraphic questions. A single vertical row of mudbricks was then placed against the face of the west balk, forming a protective 'skin' against erosion and weathering (**Resim 14 and 15**). An additional three courses of mudbrick was placed above this protective skin, to ensure that water would not run down its face. A drainage channel and pipe was then installed along the east side of this mudbrick ridge to divert water runoff away from Field 1 and the monumental mudbrick architectural remains of Temple II. Finally, a layer of mud plaster was added to the face of the section as an extra level of protection against erosion and weathering.

### **Pathways and Signage**

In conjunction with the mud brick conservation program, damage to the pathways, viewing platforms, and signage was repaired as needed. This included rebuilding the stairs that

had been created between Fields 1 and 2, and the retaining wall to the west of Temple XVI, which had been severely eroded by the annual winter rains. Fortunately, the installation of geotextile in 2016 to inhibit plant growth along the pathways had significantly reduced the amount of damage caused by plant growth during the winter, and the installation of pebble-sized gravel in 2016 had resulted in a considerably more stable walking surface.

### **CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS**

The Tayinat Archaeological Project's 2017 investigations continued to document the rich archaeological remains of the succession of Early Bronze and Iron Age settlements that occupied the ancient site, as preserved in Fields 1 and 7. The discovery of the 'Lady of Tayinat' statue, in particular, further signals the remarkable sculptural richness of the Neo-Hittite levels on the upper mound, or citadel, and the importance of continued investigations in this area of the site.

The discovery of the female statue also provides valuable insight into the innovative character and cultural sophistication of the indigenous Iron Age cultures of this region during the early first millennium BCE. The presence of these monumental sculptures, the lions, sphinxes and colossal human statues in the citadel gateways of the Neo-Hittite royal cities of Iron Age Syro-Anatolia continued a Bronze Age Hittite tradition that accentuated the symbolic role of these transitional spaces as boundary zones between the ruling elite and their subjects. By the 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, these elaborately decorated monumental gateways had come to serve as dynastic parades, legitimizing the power and authority of the ruling elite.

The Tayinat Archaeological Project's 2017 investigations also continued the successful conservation program to preserve the monumental mudbrick architecture that formed the royal palaces and temples of Tayinat's Neo-Hittite citadel. In particular, the 2017 season saw the successful consolidation and preservation of the western balk, or section, of Field 1, which will also help to further stabilize the western portion of Temple II, conserved during the 2016 season.

Further work on the network of pathways and viewing platforms in preparation for the Tayinat Archaeological Park, formally approved in 2011 by the Adana Kurul, was also an important accomplishment of the 2017 season.

The monumental mudbrick architectural conservation program was complemented by the successful completion of ongoing analyses of the extensive artifactual assemblages produced by the TAP excavations, the completion of reports, and further progress on the preparation of a master plan for the Tayinat Archaeological Park; the latter included extensive consultations with local government officials in the Hatay Büyükşehir Belediye and the relevant departments of the Hatay Valilik.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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**FIGURE CAPTIONS**

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- Resim 2. Plan of Early Bronze IV Architecture (Field Phases 8B and 10; Amuq J and I?) in Field 1.
- Resim 3. Room 4 walls and bench in Square G4.55, looking southwest (TT17\_G4\_55\_0806\_594.jpg).
- Resim 4. The architecture associated with the Red Building, looking west (TT17\_G4\_55\_0712\_175\_181.jpg photomosaic).
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- Resim 12. Side view of the female statue.
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- Resim 14. Mudbrick protective 'skin' being installed against the west balk of Field 1.
- Resim 15. The stabilized mudbrick face of the west balk of Field 1 (looking west).