KERKENES DAĞ PROJECT

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http://www.kerkenes.metu.edu.tr/

The 2009 season at Kerkenes Dağ laid the foundation for an extensive multi-year program of restoration within one of the key gates of this ancient Iron Age city. The Cappadocia Gate, so named by the project because the important region of Cappadocia lies fairly near in the southwesterly direction it leads, has been an area of intensive research since the beginning of the project (figs. 1–2). Its importance is inferred not only from the direction it leads to outside the walls, but also because of its size and its close proximity to the Palatial Complex within the city. Mapping of the gate from aerial photographs was undertaken as early as the second season of the project, in 1994. More detailed total station mapping was undertaken to recover the full plan of its walls, chamber, and towers starting in 1996.

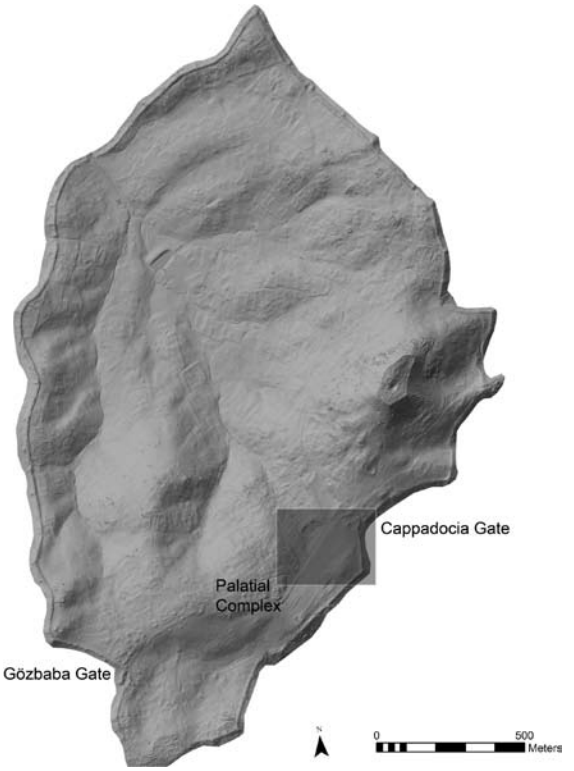

Figure 1. Locations of research at Kerkenes Dağ in 2009

Ten years ago, during the 1999 season, a large-scale clearance project was undertaken centered on the removal of the mass of fallen stone from the gate and from along the city wall for a significant area surrounding the gate. Work continued here on a yearly basis until 2003 and resulted in the removal of several meters of collapsed and broken stones from the gate and wall. This major effort was stopped in 2004, well above the original surfaces in the gate chamber, as it became apparent that the meters of freestanding walls of the towers and inner chamber of the gate had been burnt so heavily during the final destruction of the city so as to render them architecturally unsound. Further large-scale clearance, in the absence of an accompanying program of extensive restoration, was deemed too dangerous to continue. Limited work was undertaken within the gate and along the city wall when it was absolutely necessary to shore up a section or to check a specific part of the plan, but otherwise all work within this important gate ceased.

Figure 2. The Cappadocia Gate with adjacent modern animal pens (foreground) and the view down toward Cappadocia beyond. On a clear day one can even see Mount Erciyes on the horizon near Kayseri in northern Cappadocia

This strategy changed in 2009 when funds were received from the U.S. Department of State's Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation to begin a larger program of restoration within the Cappadocia Gate. Once again this important gate was the focus of extensive work, including an expansion of the geophysical survey in areas of the city adjacent to the gate and preliminary excavations within the gate that were necessary for submitting an application for restoration of the gate to the Turkish government.

Geophysical Investigations

Figure 3. Workers collecting resistivity data during the May season

Building upon the successful test area within the city next to the Cappadocia Gate in 2008 (see *2008–2009 Annual Report*, p. 89), a much larger area was surveyed adjacent to the gate in May of 2009 (fig. 3). A 56,800 sq. m area (5.5 ha) was covered by the resistivity survey successfully connecting this area with those surveyed in and around the Palatial Complex in 2006–2008 (fig. 4). Magnetometry survey conducted in this area in the mid-1990s revealed open areas delineated by freestanding walls, long narrow structures immediately opposite the gate that have been interpreted as stables, the second-largest water storage pond in the city, and additional urban blocks up around the Palatial Complex. The resistivity survey in these areas confirmed this basic arrangement while providing additional details on secondary pools within the water storage system and more detailed information on the buildings within the additional urban blocks. Next year's resistivity survey is planned to continue working south and west of the area of the Cappadocia Gate and Palatial Complex back along the top of the ridge toward the Gözbaba Gate.

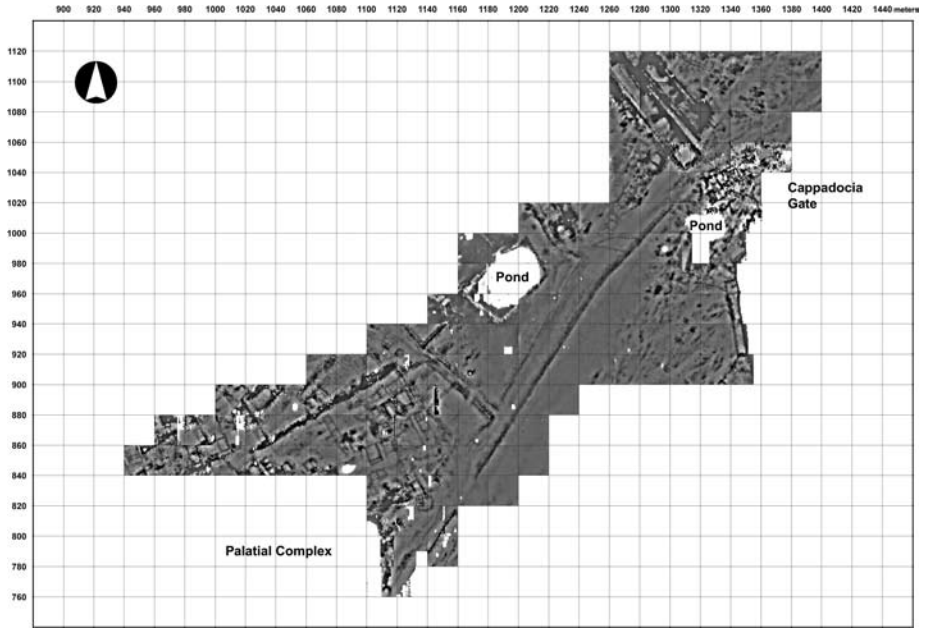

Figure 4. The results of the resistivity survey data in the area between the Cappadocia Gate and the Palatial Complex collected in 2009

Excavations in the Cappadocia Gate

In preparation for reconstruction work within the Cappadocia Gate, excavations were conducted both inside and outside the gate (fig. 5). Outside of the gate, along its northeast side, the external wall was further exposed, and a pathway was constructed over the main city wall just to the east of the gate (fig. 6). The pathway provides a way for sheep, goats, and cows that graze the site to be rerouted around the main gate passage that they have been using to enter and leave the city. This was critical both for issues of safety as well as for the long-term sustainability of reconstructive work inside the gate.

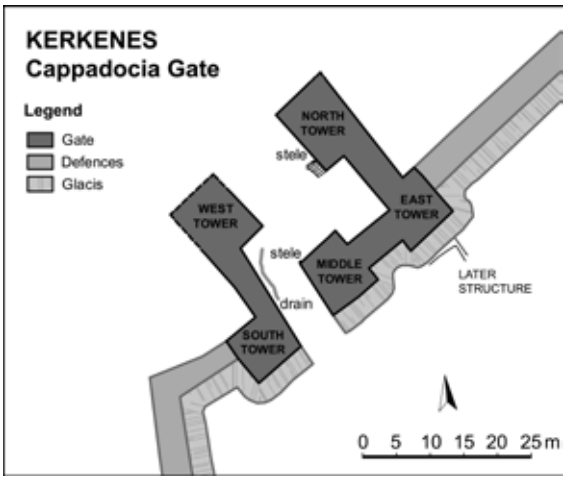

Figure 5. Plan of the Cappadocia Gate that incorporates the results of this year's excavations

Within the gate passage and gate chamber, excavation proceeded down through the last thick layers of collapsed stone and burnt debris (figs. 7–8). Stone paving was found underneath the debris throughout the gate passage and in the excavated portions of the gate chamber. This stone paving, like that in the entranceway to the Palatial Complex, shows some signs of wear from the people and animals that once used this gate to get into and out of the city. The pavement also incorporates a stone-lined drain, curving around the West Tower of the gate and then down into the lower passage, that would have helped direct the flow of water from rain or runoff down through the gate.

An impressive semi-aniconic stela had been uncovered within the gate passage adjacent to the North Tower of the gate in 2003 (see *2006–2007 Annual Report*, fig. 8). The high stepped platform upon which it had been placed was completely excavated this year down to the stone paving at its base. In addition, a second aniconic stela was uncovered set into the paving stones at the northwestern face of the western corner of the Middle Tower (fig. 9). Quite different in character and composition from the first stela, this second stela would have faced up the gate passage, past the downward-looking first stela, and on into the city.

Figure 6. A view of the outside of the Cappadocia Gate showing the preserved sloping stone glacis that once stood at the base of the external walls and towers. The new walkway created to the east of the gate to divert animal traffic around the gate passage can be seen on the right of the photograph

However, a new stela was not the only thing found within the gate passage. Lying face down on the pavement to the western side of the gate passageway was the skeleton of a victim of the catastrophic destruction of the city around 547 BC (fig. 10). She was a healthy middle-aged woman who, from her positioning, apparently fell as she attempted to run out through the gate. Her left hand was raised up, protecting her face as she fell, while her right hand was off to her side as she reached out to break her fall. However, she died where she fell as immediately thereafter the heavy wooden beams

of the gate structure, burning fiercely in the fire, fell directly upon her prone form.

No clues exist as to why this woman was still within the city as the fires raged and burned. While evidence for the horrible conflagration is found throughout the city, she is the first person that has been found who actually died as a result. This suggests perhaps that most of the population along with their belongings had been removed from the city prior to its destruction. Why was she not among them? Did she return to get a loved one or some treasured object? If so, that person apparently escaped her fate or that object was dropped before she fell. Was she perhaps hiding within the city while her fellow citizens were taken away and the city set ablaze? We may never know the specific answers as to why her life ended so tragically here, but future excavations will eventually draw a better picture of the larger destruction of the city within which she perished.

Figure 7. Excavations in the passage of the Cappadocia Gate undertaken to remove the fallen stone and debris before restoration work can begin

Much more work remains to be done within the Cappadocia Gate over the next few seasons. Excavations will be undertaken to remove the remaining debris from the gate chamber, fully exposing the stone paved floors and precarious walls throughout this five-towered structure. Going hand in hand with the excavation will be a large program of restoration, replacing heavily burnt stones with new stone when necessary and shoring up the impressive walls to preserve them and make them safe for visitors for decades to come. One of the first visitors to see the results of the 2009 excavations in the Cappadocia Gate was the U.S. ambassador to Turkey, James Jeffrey (fig. 11). Without the generous funding for the start of the restoration project by the U.S. Department of State's Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, this work could not have commenced.

Figure 8. Photograph of the inside of the gate passage and chamber showing the extent of this year's excavation. Excavation will continue next year with the removal of the remaining portion of collapse in the gate chamber

Figure 9. The new aniconic stela discovered adjacent to the western corner of the Middle Tower

Figure 10. The right hand of the woman tragically killed within the Cappadocia Gate during the destruction of the city emerges from beneath the burning and collapse

Figure 11. Ambassador Jeffrey Stone visiting the excavations in the Cappadocia Gate and viewing the new stela uncovered there

Metallurgical Analysis

Ongoing laboratory analysis of the metals at Kerkenes Dağ by Joseph Lehner at UCLA continued during this year. Utilizing thin sections and isotopic analysis, he has been able to better understand both the manufacturing process of metal objects excavated at various locations within the city and the proveniences of their original ores. One of the more interesting results of this work so far is the identification of the practice of coating the surface of bronze sheet with a layer of tin, perhaps for decorative purposes. This is a practice that becomes common only centuries later.

Kerkenes Eco-center

A number of workshops and lectures focused on organic farming and food production were held in Şahmuratı throughout the year. With organic farming already having taken root in Şahmuratlı years ago through the early efforts of the Kerkenes Eco-center, these workshops provided a venue for local farmers to share their experiences with and learn from a growing community of organic farmers in villages across Turkey. Products from Şahmuratlı can be found in the excavation kitchens, in local stores, at local festivals, and even at events in Ankara. The Eco-center also has attracted a number of international visitors and participants, all eager to learn from its successes. One of those successes has been the development of solar-powered devices for cooking and drying food. The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Global Environment Fund (GEF) recognized the success of an earlier grant they provided for this portion of the project, by generously awarding a second grant to build a second generation of several of these devices.

Acknowledgments

The Kerkenes Dağ Project is a joint project between the Oriental Institute and the British Institute of Archaeology in Ankara. It is co-directed by Dr. Geoffrey Summers of Middle East Technical University (METU). The Kerkenes Eco-center Project is directed by Françoise Summers of METU, who is also jointly directing the restoration work within the Cappadocia Gate with Geoffrey Summers and Dr. Nilüfer Yöney of Istanbul Technical University. Professor Dr. Yılmaz Erdal of Hacettepe University generously provided invaluable expertise in analyzing the skeletal remains found within the Cappadocia Gate.

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