

§1 Introduction to the excavation narrative

J.N. Postgate

This part of the report is designed to give a comprehensive account of the stratigraphy and architecture of the areas excavated and to supply the provenance of the artefacts and environmental materials published in other parts. The Late Bronze Age and Iron Age work described here was all undertaken in areas already excavated in the 1990s. The earliest, Late Bronze Age, levels labelled Level IIIc-e (§3) were in the north-western part of the site, in the space west of the later Stele Building. Although the plan of the Stele Building itself in phase IIc had already been established, we continued to work there within the walls, clearing to the IIa floors and so recovering the building's initial layout (§5). In Level II outside the Stele Building to the west was the Western Courtyard, an open space with pits and fire installations. The successive phases of this courtyard were excavated in I19 and H19 (§4), and later this was extended southwards into I18 where the IIe and IIf occupation phases post-dating the Stele Building were excavated (§6). While there is reason to think that both the Stele Building and its Level III predecessor were in some sense “public” establishments, the buildings exposed in the Central Strip south of the Byzantine basilica belonged to a more ordinary residential quarter. Here in I14 we had already excavated two consecutive houses assigned to Levels 2 and 3, and some further work in I14 improved our understanding of the Level 3 layout (§7.1). Further east in J14, K14 and L14 the objective was to recover a stratigraphic sequence linking Level 3 with the latest of the Level 2 occupations belonging to the Iron Age (§7.2).

Period	Dates BC	Phases Excavated									
		Northwest Corner				Central Strip					
		Level	NW B.	Stele B.	I18	Level	(see Table 2)				
Byzantine and Hellenistic		I				1					
Iron Age	800-650	II				2	2k	Surface 1			
	1150-800						2f				
											2e
Terminal Late Bronze Age	1250-1150							IIe			
Late Bronze Age	1350-1250	III				3		Phases 6a-c			
							IIId		IIId		
							IIc		IIc		
	1500-1350						IIb.ii	Phases 7-11			
							IIb.i				
	IIa	Phases 12-15									
	IIIe										
	IIId										
	IIIc										
	IIIa-b										

Table 1: Late Bronze Age and Iron Age excavations 2007-2011, showing stratigraphic labelling in different areas. Dates to nearest half-century.

The North-West Building, the Stele Building and Western Courtyard (§§3-6)

In general, the work in 2007-2011 may be said to have reinforced and refined the results of our earlier work. In EKT 137 the nature of the Stele Building was summarized by drawing attention to its storage facilities and cultic features. The investigation of the earlier IIa and IIb phases has reaffirmed these characteristics, and the position now was summarized in Postgate & Stone 2013, 203 as follows: “the Stele Building . . . , while clearly serving as a storehouse and very likely as the base for local administrators in the 13th and early 12th centuries, displays certain elements, principally the altar and the stele itself, which point to a cultic role as well. This is backed up by non-utilitarian, and therefore perhaps symbolic, features”. Specifically, these features include beads in the plaster of Room 8 and perhaps Room 10, the tortoise shell and copper implement in the IIa floor of Room 8, and, possibly, the copper sickle blade in Room 9. Animal horns were associated with the structure outside the SW corner and within the masonry of the IIc south wall of Room 7, and a young sheep was interred under the floor of Room 2. The astragali buried beneath the IIc floor of Room 7 and behind the altar in Room 3 are probably there in consequence of their function as artefacts, rather than as animal body parts.

The careful examination of the initial layout and foundation of the building in 2007-2009 revealed that the site preparation for the IIa phase was surprisingly haphazard. The site sloped noticeably from NE to SW, and it was nowhere consistently levelled. In places the walls were placed in a foundation trench, but for the most part they were laid on flat or sloping ground. Nevertheless the walls of its IIa phase present a coherent structure broadly similar to the later IIc building. The main uncertainty about it, both in phases IIa/b and in IIc, is where the access to the outside could have been.

The terrain on which the Stele Building was erected seems to have been only sparsely built on, if at all, and there were certainly pits, some of them of Level IIIe but some perhaps of a transitional phase between IIIe and IIa. As far as the limited evidence allows, this space was an open area to the east of the important North-West Building in H19 and I19 which has been excavated in Levels IIIc, IIId and IIIe (Levels IIIa and IIIb were excavated only in the 1990s). Since this building has some features which resemble the Stele Building, we are inclined to see it as a predecessor, and as preserved it is of a similar size. It is unfortunate that some of the most significant rooms may have been lost along the west side of the complex, but the single ivory stamp seal recovered from the IIIc occupation levels of Room 32 reminds us of the four stamp seals in and around the Stele Building, and promotes the idea that the North-West Building also had an administrative role. On the other hand, the triangular platform in Room 33, along with its unusually clean floor and wall plasters, could have a cultic role, and it is plain that with its reiterated plasterings Room 32 received special treatment from the builders. The space in Level IIIc was differently disposed, but the two copper torcs beneath the floor of Room 32 and the pair of horn-cores beneath Room 38 are tellingly reminiscent of similar deposits in the Stele Building.

There are therefore distinct similarities between the two buildings, and the principal differences are twofold. For one, the new building was situated further to the east, while the site of the North-West Building became an open area (described as the Western Courtyard), and hosting only fire installations, pits and occasional scrappy structures. The other difference is the orientation: whereas the North-West Building is oriented NW-SE, the Stele Building is rotated about 45° to the east and is aligned approximately NE-SW. Strikingly, it seems to have been only the Stele Building which adopted this alignment, because in the SW part of the Western Courtyard Level IIa/b walls retain the old orientation, and the same applies to the walls immediately north of the NW corner of the IIc Stele Building.

The Central Strip (§7)

Excavation south of the Church had already begun in 1996 in K14 and I14, with a little work in J14. Our return to this “Central Strip” was undertaken in the hope of shedding more light on the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age, which is very scantily represented in the North-West corner. In 1996-8 Level numbers (1-3) were assigned using Arabic rather than Roman numerals, to avoid giving the impression that the stratification here exactly mapped that of the North-West corner where the main levels were given Roman numerals (see EKT p. 173). This proved to have been prudent: while Level 1 in the Central Strip covers the Byzantine and Hellenistic strata just like Level I further north, it became apparent from both the ceramics and the ¹⁴C evidence that the transition from Level 3 to Level 2 in the Central Strip took place later than the initial construction of the Stele Building which by definition marks the beginning of Level II. In other words, the Level 3 house in I14 was probably contemporary with phases IIa and IIb of the Stele Building.

The stratigraphic sequence in the Central Strip is both complex in itself and further complicated by its excavation history (see Table 2). It is most easily grasped by starting from the lowest point we reached, which is a patch of stone paving in K14. This was the earliest (and only paved example) of a succession of surfaces which accumulated in the space east of W1012 and were labelled by us Phases 8 to 14 (Phase 15 remains unexcavated). In some of these phases we encountered the corners of stone foundations both to the north and to the south, and also fire installations, but some part of this space was always open and the surfaces always respected the east face of W1012.

W 1012 is the eastern wall of a building which is contemporary with, if not actually a part of, the house first excavated in I14 in 1996. It must have been occupied continuously while the Phase 15 to 8 sequence of external surfaces built up, but there was no comparable accumulation inside the house, which had a single floor at about +95.85 m, on which a thick layer of packing was deposited. In this packing, on and just above the floor in Room 98, were a pilgrim flask with stand and a trefoil rim jar, and these agree with the evidence of the C14 samples in suggesting that this house, assigned by us to Level 3, should belong to the end of the Late Bronze Age, contemporary with the earlier phase of the Stele Building (Level IIa-b). Further to the west the architectural plan was totally lost for more than 3 m as a result of the massive storage pit P11/11, but beyond this the excavation in 1995-6 exposed parts of three rooms (Rooms 91-93) and a courtyard (Room 94), the most significant feature of which were the two pithos-sized storage jars in the NE corner of Room 91.

Ceramic vessels therefore remained in situ both sides of P11/11, and the floors and walls were likewise buried in relatively sterile fill, above which a layer of packing up to 40 cm in depth (Phase 6) sealed the tops of the walls. This band of fill respected the west face of the remaining stub of W1006, but beyond this Phase 6 is represented by three sub-phases (6a-c). The occupation sequence accumulated against the east of wall of the house (W1012) had been sealed initially by a layer of clean yellow material (labelled Phase 7), and the three sub-phases overlying this were different from the Phase 6 band to the west and from each other. The earliest, Phase 6c, is the most distinctive, because it hosted the double arc of post-holes which we assume derives from a circular timber structure some 8 m in diameter. While some uncertainties remain, including the building's shape (circular or elliptical?) and the precise tectonic design of a double concentric ring, there cannot be any doubt that whatever it was, this structure and its surrounding space completely wiped out the previous settlement layout of rectilinear houses on stone foundations. Whether it is relevant to compare the broadly contemporary elliptical building excavated at Tarsus and a whole raft of

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elliptical structures in the Aegean region from the same time has to remain uncertain in the lack of a complete plan of the Kilise Tepe structure, but it is worth noting that multiple post-holes were observed in the rough surface overlying the Level IId Stele Building (see plan, EKT p. 837 Fig. 496), and some post-holes were also present in Phase 6b (see directly) and in the Phase 5 courtyard area in J14. Phase 6b is represented principally by some fragments of stone foundation and clean bricky fill, but also by a few postholes near the SW sector of the 6c ring, while 6a almost exclusively consists of a fire installation (FI11/10) backed up against the east face of W1006.

In our original K14 sounding Phase 6 lies directly beneath the sequence of Surfaces 4, 3 and 2 which will be described shortly. However it did not immediately precede them in time, as our work in J14 in 2011 revealed the existence of a previously unsuspected architectural phase which corresponds to the later of the two houses excavated in I14 (assigned to “Level 2 early”; see EKT p. 175 with Fig. 505). Just as in Level 3 the house at the west end of the sounding remained in place while there was a build-up of occupation surfaces in the open space to its east, so too in Phase 5 a sequence of exterior floors (Surfaces 5e to 5a) filled the same space in J14 and co-existed with the “Level 2 early” house in I14. In the latest phase of these floors (5a) there was an unusual fire installation based on rough stones and with brick sides, which was reconstructed more than once. Two or more of the consecutive surfaces were plastered with a thick layer of clean yellowish clay, discoloured in places by burning. In two of these surfaces were numerous post-holes, some of which formed a rectangular shape suggesting that there had been a temporary shelter. All in all this space gives the impression not so much of a “courtyard” as a “forecourt” – an unroofed and unenclosed space associated with a house, in this case lying to the west.

	I14	J14	J14	K/L14	K/L14	
Level (1994-98)	Architecture etc.	Forecourt	Architecture etc.	Open space?	Architecture etc.	
Level 2k	“Ditch”=P11/11					
Level 2 late	None	Surface 1	P11/07	Surface 1	FI08/2-4 P07/9, P07/15, P09/55	2f
		Surface 2		Surface 2		
		Surface 3	W1002	Surface 3	None	2e
		Surface 4		Surface 4		
Level 2 early	House in I14	Surface 5a	W1004 + W1005 FI11/4			
		Surface 5b				
		Surface 5c				
		Surface 5d				
		Surface 5e				
Terminal Level 3	Packing	Phase 6 P11/51	W1006+W1007	Phase 6a	FI11/10	
				Phase 6b	W7502 + W7503	
				Phase 6c	Post-holes	
				Phase 7		
Level 3	Houses in I14		W1009 + W1012 +W1014	Phase 8	W7509 + W96/47 W4300 + W4301 + W4111 + W4110+ W7504	
				Phase 9	FI96/16	
				Phase 10	W7505 + W96/48 + W96/47+ W7509	
				Phase 11		
				Phase 12	W7507 + W7510 P09/22, P09/19	
				Phase 13	P09/44, P09/45	
				Phase 14	Paving 92090	

			Phase 15
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Table 2: Stratigraphic chart of the Central Strip sounding

The shift from Phase 5 to Surface 4 is probably the most radical change in the entire sequence. The preceding stratification was sliced horizontally, cutting into Phase 6 in K14 and so removing all Phase 5 material there. Above a layer of packing a thick plastered surface was laid down, across the northern half of squares J14 and K14 into L14, pock-marked throughout by circular holes conceivably resulting from decayed vegetation. Except for a stretch of wall towards the west end (W96/61) there were no associated architectural features, fire installations or strictly contemporary pits. The same applies to Surface 3, which was extremely similar but about 40 cm higher up, and to Surface 2 which covered the same area but without a clean clay surface. Only with the arrival of Surface 1 is there a hint of architecture again, in the shape of three fire installations in the north side of K14c; but the storage pits are the most striking feature of Surface 1. These include at least three deep cylindrical pits with layers of phytoliths deriving from their use as grain storage facilities, but also two exceptionally large facilities. One of these, P09/55 in K14d, is approximately square in outline (3.55 x 3.80 m) and 2.60 m deep, giving it a capacity of about 35 cubic metres; the other, P11/11, is a rectangular trench with one vertical and one sloping side, 3 m in depth giving it a capacity of about 72 cubic metres. From the back fill of this pit in the 1990s came a handful of Geometric sherds suggesting a date no later than the 7th century (J.N. Coldstream, cited EKT p. 371), and this can be reconciled with the evidence of C14 Samples 39 and 42 from Surface 1. Here in the Central Strip these storage pits and their associated surface are the latest remains before the Hellenistic buildings of Level 1, suggesting that there was a hiatus in occupation of at least two centuries.

Synthesis

In conclusion, we are able to see some clear changes in the settlement history of Kilise Tepe over the period from the Late Bronze Age to the end of the early Iron Age. In the North-West corner a complex of rooms displays several features which suggest that it had public and/or cultic functions like the Stele Building which succeeded it. C14 dates put phases IIIc and IIIId back into the 15th-14th centuries BC and the presence of an inscribed ivory stamp seal in Level IIIId is best accounted for if at this time the settlement at Kilise Tepe was under the domination of the Hittite realm. The Stele Building itself, which was built in the second half of the 14th century seems to have survived until early in the 12th century, when its IIc and IId phases appear both successively to have been severely damaged by fire. If the IId destruction is dated by its Mycenaean ceramics to around 1175 BC, it is tempting to place the IIc destruction around the turn of the century or a decade later, i.e. 1190 BC, the date when conventionally the Hittite capital and the city of Ugarit were themselves sacked and there was widespread disruption of the status quo across the Near East. Indeed, the varied copper arrowheads retrieved from the destruction layer of the IIc building (EKT p. 518 Fig. 392) are best explained as deriving from a hostile event.

It is unclear whether the Stele Building or its site was occupied after phase IId because the site was shorn away by Hellenistic and Byzantine building works. It does however look as though occupation continued for some time in the Western Courtyard, and the architectural layout of this part of the site did not change radically until phase IIIf which is firmly associated with the White-Painted IV Iron Age ceramics. The radiocarbon dates from I18 indicate that the later IIe occupation here belongs in the earlier 8th century, but the stratigraphy is too shallow to convey a full sequence of events.

Instead, for the occupation history of the site after the event which destroyed the IId Stele Building, we have to consult the sequence in the Central Strip. There the earliest levels (phases 15 up to 7) belong to the Level 3 domestic house (in I/J14) and its associated forecourt (in J/K14), the ceramics from which appear to be contemporary with the earlier phases of the Stele Building (Level IIa/b; Bouthillier et al. 2014, 150). There is then a total redevelopment of the area, the building being replaced with a flattened space which at one stage saw the erection of a large circular timber structure. At a later stage (Surface 5) we find a new house on the same site as the Level 3 house, towards the west rim of the mound, with a similar sequence of forecourts, and then this house too is abandoned and the space is given over to a succession of levelled surfaces with few signs of occupation. Finally with Surface 1 (or perhaps already with Surface 2) the ceramics indicate that we have reached the same phase as Level IIf at the north end of the site. At this stage there are still no buildings in our strip, but a number of storage pits, two of which are extremely large.

A settlement like Kilise Tepe with its strategic location astride more than one land route and its readily defensible configuration can never have been immune from external influences, and this is of course mirrored in the ceramics which switch from shapes and fabrics characteristic of Central Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age to Eastern Mediterranean Iron Age types some of which were probably made on site. This shift responded to political and related socio-economic changes which must both have been the consequence of events on the wider historical canvas and have had their effect on the architectural history of the site. Comparing the campaign accounts of Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings with the archaeological evidence for hill top fortifications in the mountainous reaches of Cilicia makes it likely that in the 8th-6th centuries BC political power in this region was in the hands of local dynasties with fortified bases in the hills, and the phase 2f grain storage facilities help us to locate Kilise Tepe in this scene.

Technical details

The texts in this section of the report derive partly from the excavators of the area in question, but have inevitably been redacted by the editor to achieve consistency. Where significant sections of the text have been added, this is acknowledged by joint authorship.

As in our earlier report (EKT), sections of the text are separated by enumerations of the relevant excavation units and of the finds reported from them. Where a find is catalogued in the Artefacts chapter, its catalogue number is given (e.g. **345**). Most “environmental” finds, such as unworked shells, animal bones, soil samples, are not listed here (they should be present in the digital data-base which will in due course be generally accessible on-line), but a few items, such as pieces of antler and tortoise shell, are listed since they are expected to be described or at least recorded in the zoo-archaeological chapter. Also included here are individual ceramic items which were numbered on site; some of these may not be individually described in the ceramic chapters, but others may. C14 samples processed at Oxford by ORAU are also listed, referring to §2 (e.g. **¹⁴C54**).

Many units have no listed items. The reader may wonder what value there is in listing these, but there are at least two reasons for including them. The mention of the units gives some idea of the excavation process, including the year of excavation (units 70000ff. being from 2007, 80000ff. from 2008 etc.), and it may supply a provenance for items to be described in the ceramic and zoo-archaeological chapters. Not all pits are listed or described. If they contained an artifact catalogued in the section, they are included, but there seems little point in describing a pit which has no impact on the surrounding architecture or implications for the stratigraphy. Please note that there is no difference between (for example) P09/3 and P09/03 and in some cases both styles were used in the field and may coexist in our text.

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Spot heights are indicated thus: +96.72 m. This indicates 96.72 metres above the arbitrary site datum of +100.00 m (=approx. 142 m above sea level), as explained in EKT p. xxiii. Heights which are approximated or do not derive directly from an instrument reading are shown thus: ~96.72 m, and should be accurate to within 5-10 cm.