

ÇADIR HÖYÜK

GREGORY McMAHON

The Çadır Höyük site (fig. 1) is located in the Yozgat Province of central Turkey. We are three weeks into the 2018 season, following up on the great discoveries made in the 2017 season. All of our recent seasons have benefitted from the presence of University of Chicago graduate students and alumni. With us in 2017 was Tony Lauricella who is a senior field supervisor. Also with us was Stephanie Selover, now in a tenure track position at the University of Washington, a proud Oriental Institute graduate. We were in touch on a regular basis with Josh Cannon, who is currently working on completing his dissertation on our second millennium BCE Hittite-period ceramics.



ABOVE: Figure 1. Çadır Höyük site.



ABOVE: Figure 2. Stephanie explains her trench to the team.

JUNE THROUGH AUGUST 2017

Hasan Şenyurt remains the director of the Yozgat Museum, the regional museum which oversees our work. He has been of immense help to us over the years and we are happy that he remains at the Yozgat Museum. In the 2017 season we benefitted from the help of our government representative Nezir Arı. We had a nearly eight-week season, extending from mid-June until early August. During the season we partially or fully opened a total of nineteen 10 × 10 m trenches, hosted thirty-five researchers, and employed thirty-eight workers at the site. Trenches spanned the Late Chalcolithic (mid-late fourth millennium BCE) to the final century of the Byzantine occupation in the early centuries of the second millennium CE. The trenches featuring the prehistoric periods are on the southern slope of the mound. Here we have seven trenches offering Late Chalcolithic (ca. 3800–3100 BCE) architectural remains. Two of these, USS 9 and USS 10, are supervised by Stephanie Selover (fig. 2). Stephanie's trenches are quite important because they are helping us to understand how the fourth millennium residents used the mound. She, in conjunction with the supervisors in the lower town area, have demonstrated over the last several seasons that our Late Chalcolithic settlement was “terraced” with a lower town and an upper town (the latter in Stephanie's trench). In previous seasons she has articulated the Early Bronze I occupation in that area which was primarily industrial and likely existed on the edge of the EB town which had receded after the more robust Late Chalcolithic settlement. The 2018 season has seen Stephanie proceeding with her excavations. Her goal is to discover whether the Late Chalcolithic remains in her trench are primarily domestic in nature, showing the transition from domestic to industrial over the course of the change in millennia.

In the lower trenches (SES 1–2, LSS 3–5) is the major expanse of our Late Chalcolithic occupation (fig. 3). These trenches are supervised by Laurel Hackley (Brown University) and Burcu Yıldırım



ABOVE: Figure 3. The lower trenches (SES 1-2, LSS 3-5), the major expanse of our Late Chalcolithic occupation.

(Middle East Technical University). Both supervisors have carefully documented a number of phases of occupation spanning the early fourth millennium to the abandonment of the area at the end of, or just after the end of, the fourth millennium BCE. Perhaps the most remarkable discovery of the 2017 season was that which was uncovered in the last two days of the season. A sloping “patio” in one of Burcu’s trenches proffered three openings which contained three young child burials (figs. 4–5). Each of these was either covered by, or lying within, a ceramic vessel (broken). Though we have had many infant and some child burials in this level, these stand out because of the burial goods interred with the children. Each had at least five separate metal items including rings, bracelets, and hair slides. Prior to this discovery, only one burial (out of more than two dozen) had any metal contributed as a burial good, and in that case it was a single earring. These were certainly special burials. The 2018 season is being devoted to locating any additional burials in this level, and determining the reason for the placement of these burials in what appears to be a courtyard.

RIGHT AND MIDDLE:
Figures 4-5. Three
young child burials
found in Burcu's
trenches. BELOW:
Figure 6. Tony
excavates a feature.



We opened ten 10 × 10 m trenches on the mound summit, all offering mainly Byzantine remains, with some exposure of Late Iron. Tony Lauricella is the area supervisor on the summit and was also directly in charge of three of these trenches. It was a “problem solving” season for Tony. He uncovered a variety of features in his three trenches, including a headstone of a bishop, a tabun and stone platform, and a degraded storage building (fig. 6). Our 2017 excavations on the summit led us to understand that there were three phases of occupation near the end of the Çadır settlement. The tenth–eleventh century settlement was one continuing from earlier centuries in which the summit was used in a casual fashion for storage and other activities, but not really for domestic occupation. In the late eleventh or perhaps into the twelfth century, there seems to have been a rapid movement of people onto the summit, constructing makeshift rooms, building tabuns, and bringing their household equipment. The final stage of occupation, discovered in 2016 and reported on last year, was by the Selçuks, who appear to have rebuilt the eastern part of the mound for what was likely a short-lived occupation.



ABOVE: Figures 7-8. Ringed interior rooms on the western side of the mound (LEFT) and a plastered gateway (RIGHT).

The other summit trenches were also productive. Previous seasons have demonstrated that the tenth-century defensive wall builders ringed the interior rooms, some seeming to be storage or related to guard duties. The 2017 excavations confirmed that this trend continued on the western side of the mound where we opened SMW 6 (fig. 7) supervised by Emrah Dinç (Bilkent University). On the southern end of the summit Jordan Dills (Trent University) supervised USS 1, which offered a surprise. We expected to find the continuation of the tenth-century Byzantine wall and interior rooms (as were found in USS 2 in 2016). However, Jordan came down on a plastered gateway (fig. 8) that likely dates to the earlier building phase on the summit (ca. seventh or eighth century CE). This is a beautifully constructed gateway flanked by a cross etched onto a brick on the western arm of the gate. The tenth century (larger) wall builders apparently used this gateway until it was blocked by a massive pile of mudbrick, perhaps just before the arrival of some perceived threat (Selçuks or possibly mercenaries known to be in the area). We are continuing investigation of this structure in our 2018 season. The final trenches investigated in the 2017 season were on the northern slope. These provided both more information on the tenth century Byzantine wall as well as glimpses of the Late Iron Age architecture underpinning the wall. We are in the process of investigating this as well in this 2018 season.

We had a surprise visit near the end of our season from a Yozgat television crew wanting to tell their audience about our excavations. Gregory McMahon, the project director, gave a twenty-minute interview in the blazing sun of a quite hot day (fig. 9). We didn't see the piece air, but we were pleased that the television station took time to send a team out.



ABOVE: Figure 9. Gregory McMahon giving an interview.



ABOVE: Figure 10. Drone photo of Çadır Höyük taken by Emre Şerifoğlu. FAR RIGHT: The Çadır Höyük 2017-18 team.



Our 2017 season came to a close in early August with our final photos and excellent drone photos (fig. 10) taken by our assistant director Emre Şerifoğlu (Bitlis Eren University). We had an exceptionally productive 2017 season with our excellent team (fig. 11), and we were eager to return in 2018. Thus far our 2018 season has proven equally successful, and we look forward to reporting on it next summer.
