

**TAYINAT ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT
2011 SEASONAL REPORT**

[Not for Publication]

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January 31, 2012

INTRODUCTION

The Tayinat Archaeological Project (TAP) completed its eighth season of excavations at Tell Tayinat in 2011, conducted between June 19 and August 15. The field excavations were followed by two months of laboratory analysis and research, conducted between September 12 and November 11, 2011, in preparation of reports and conference presentations on the results of the 2011 season.

The 2011 TAP senior staff consisted of Dr. Timothy Harrison (Project Director), Dr. Elif Denel (Assistant Director), Dr. Stephen Batiuk (Senior Field Archaeologist), Dr. Lynn Welton (Field 1 Operations), James Osborne (Field 2 Operations), Dr. Jacob Lauinger (Epigrapher), Dr. Fiona Haughey (Artifact Illustrator and Shell Specialist), Elizabeth Drolet and Caird Harbeck (Conservator), and Jennifer Jackson (Photographer). Dr. Elif Ünlü, of Boğaziçi University, also participated in the field season. The project was assisted by 21 archaeology and geophysics students from Boğaziçi University, Harvard University, Istanbul University, Koç University, LaTrobe University, Mustafa Kemal University, Oxford University, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Toronto. Mr. Mustafa Baysal served as government representative on behalf of the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums.

The primary objectives of the 2011 TAP field season were as follows: (1) excavate and expand the exposure of the Early Bronze Age (specifically Amuq Phase E, or EB IVB) levels in Field 1; (2) expand the horizontal exposure of the Iron II/III complex in Field 2 to the north, with targeted soundings below the floors of Building XVI; (3) open exploratory soundings in the northeast quadrant of the upper mound, designated Field 6; (4) complete an extensive geophysical survey of the upper mound, particularly in Fields 2 and 6; and (4) complete the stabilization and conservation of the extensive artifact assemblages accumulated from recent

field seasons, most notably the artifacts and cache of cuneiform tablets recovered in 2009 from Building XVI in Field 2, now stored in the Antakya Archaeological Museum.

FIELD 1 EXCAVATIONS (L. WELTON)

Field 1 is located in the center of the upper mound, on the southern edge of the Syro-Hittite Expedition's West Central Area excavations (**fig. 1**). The Field 1 excavations were initiated as part of a two-week exploratory sounding in 2004, and in 2005 expanded to the current four 10x10 m squares (G4.55, G4.56, G4.65 and G4.66). To date, the excavations have succeeded in delineating nine superimposed architectural phases, or Field Phases (FP), with the primary sequence (FPs 3-6) dating to the 12th-11th centuries BCE, or the Early Iron I (or Iron IA) period. As noted above, the primary objective of the 2011 season was to continue the effort to expand the exposure of the Early Bronze Age (EBA) levels in Field 1, specifically the late third millennium BCE, or Amuq Phase J (EB IVB) cultural horizon. Consequently, excavations were conducted in Squares G4.56 and G4.65 (**fig. 2**). G4.58, a new square to the east, was also opened and preliminarily assigned to Field 1.

Square G4.56 (D. Lumb; assisted by S. As)

The primary aim of the 2011 season in Square G4.56, the seventh season conducted thus far in the square, was to outline the walls of the EBA building (FP 8), which appeared to extend eastward from G4.55, and thereby expand the exposure of the EBA levels in this area. Isolated deposits of Iron I material, concentrated mainly in the southeastern corner of the square, were also removed.

At the end of the 2010 season, it was believed the EBA remains in G4.56 were concentrated in the western part of the square. It was not clear whether this was because the EBA settlement was perched on the southeastern edge of a small rise or mound in this area, or whether it was due to substantially deeper Early Iron Age deposits. In any event, excavations proceeded

to uncover a series of interconnecting walls that formed a complex of between six to seven rooms (**fig. 2**). Since excavations did not reach floor levels before the end of the season, this complex has been assigned tentatively to FP 8b, and the fills in the associated rooms assigned to FP 8a, or its terminal ‘destruction’ phase. The majority of the EBA remains excavated in 2011 comprised an amorphous deposit that sealed (and separated) the FP 8 architecture from the later Iron I horizon, and therefore should most probably be assigned to FP 7.

However, it is important to note that the architectural character of the G4.56 walls is notably different from that preserved to the west. There is no evidence at present for any interior buttressing, a key feature of the construction technique to the west. Secondly, the walls are much smaller and thinner in construction, contrasting significantly with the large, broad walls observed in G4.55 to the west. In addition, the walls in G4.56 appear to be organized into a series of small cell-like rooms, which clearly abut the larger construction to the west. Thus, it may be that the G4.56 architecture, or at least parts of it, represents a later addition, which would require a further refinement of the architectural phasing in this area.

Square G4.65 (J. Roames; assisted by H. Demir and D. Özegeli)

G4.65 had not been excavated since 2007, due in part because the 2007 season had reached EBA levels, and therefore necessitated a pause in excavation until the neighboring squares had reached the same stratigraphic phase (**fig. 2**). In addition, the southern portion of the square was determined to have been heavily impacted by erosion. Consequently, the 2011 excavations focused initially in the northern 6 m of the square, where intact EBA material had already been found in 2007. By the end of the season, however, intact EBA remains had been exposed across the entire north-south extent of the square.

The 2011 excavations in G4.65 revealed a series of interconnected mud brick walls, which had been built using construction techniques similar to those used to produce the walls in

G4.56. The G4.65 walls formed a series of mostly long, rectangular rooms, and also appeared to represent later additions to the large FP 8 building preserved to the north in G4.55. In all, a complex of six rooms was uncovered. Several of these rooms contained hearths or cooking installations, suggesting a primarily domestic function for this area.

Square G4.58 (D. Jablonkay; assisted by P. Kurt and D. Leonard)

A new square, G4.58, was opened to the east of Field 1 in 2011 (**figs. 1, 3 and 4**), with the goal of examining the area immediately to the south of the Field 2 temple (Building XVI), which is believed to have functioned as a courtyard, part of a ‘sacred precinct’ encompassing Building XVI and the 1930s excavated temple (Building II). Since much of the stone pavement that had formed this courtyard is no longer preserved, it was hoped excavations could clarify the level of erosion (or modern disturbance) in this area, as well as determine what earlier cultural levels might be accessible.

Excavations proceeded to unearth the fragmentary remains of what appears to have been part of a monumental gate complex (**figs. 5-6**) that provided access to the citadel area of the upper mound during the Iron II period (ca. 9th-8th centuries BCE), corresponding to the historical era when Tayinat (ancient Kunulua) served as the royal capital of the Neo-Hittite Kingdom of Patina. The excavated portion appears to be part of the west (or northwest) pier of the gate, preserved in the form of a single row of roughly hewn limestone blocks, with corner blocks at its northern and southern ends. This row of limestone blocks most likely was the foundation, or ‘footing’, for a line of basalt orthostats that would have formed a façade for the mud brick core of the pier, as similarly found in the other gate systems at Tell Tayinat (e.g., Gateways VII and XI). To the west of this line of stone, excavations revealed an expanse of mud brick, very likely part of the core of the western half of the gate complex. A flat line of stones aligned against the eastern, interior face of the limestone blocks may have served as a bench in the gateway area.

Fragments of white plaster-like material were found adhering to the eastern face of these flat-lying stones, possibly all that remained of the primary surface or floor of the gate chamber. Otherwise, no discernable surfaces were uncovered within the gate structure itself, inferring that much—if not all—of the gate superstructure had been destroyed or removed in antiquity. If so, this would suggest that the large expanse of mud brick exposed to the west represents part of the foundations of the gate complex, which essentially formed a large platform that supported the gate superstructure.

Associated with the gate, but found discarded out of position to the north lying on its side (**fig. 7**), was a magnificently carved basalt lion figure that measures approximately 1.3 m in height and 1.6 m in length (**fig. 8**). The lion is uniquely poised in a seated position, with ears back, claws extended and roaring. The stylistic features of the lion closely resemble those of the double-lion column base found in the entrance to Building II, the temple excavated in the 1930s. Whether reused, or carved during the Assyrian occupation of the site, these later lion figures now clearly belong to a local Neo-Hittite sculptural tradition that predated the arrival of the Assyrians, and were not the product of Assyrian cultural influence, as scholars have long assumed. The architectural phase and precise date of the lion's construction remain uncertain, but it was clearly removed from its original standing position prior to the construction of the Neo-Assyrian temple precinct complex in the late 8th/early 7th centuries BCE.

A second sculptural piece, the front part of a large statue base, depicts the 'Master and the Animals' motif comprised of a human figure flanked by lions (**fig. 9**). Carved out of basalt, this sculptural fragment was found upturned out of position to the southwest of the line of limestone blocks at the every end of the excavation season.

The excavations in G4.58 have only just begun to uncover what remains of this apparent citadel gate complex, and there is good reason to believe that considerably more of the complex

remains to be discovered. Although only partially excavated, the Tayinat gate complex nevertheless is reminiscent of the citadel gate complex excavated by Woolley in 1911 at Carchemish. Intriguingly, the Carchemish citadel gate was also adorned with lion sculptures and a statute mounted on a base decorated with the 'Master and the Animals' motif. The Carchemish citadel gate, of course, was also approached via a long processional way flanked with ornately carved orthostats and a 'great' stone stairway, forming a monumental ceremonial approach to the citadel area.

FIELD 2 EXCAVATIONS (J. OSBORNE)

2011 was the sixth season of excavation in Field 2. Operations began in this field in 2005 and have continued annually since then, with the exception of 2010. The Field 2 excavations thus far have had two primary objectives: (1) the excavation of a large palatial complex, identified as Building XIV (2005-2007 seasons), and (2) the excavation of a temple, Building XVI (2008-2009 seasons). Following a study season in 2010, excavations were resumed during the 2011 season. The primary objectives of the field season were two-fold: (1) to explore the areas immediately to the north of Building XVI; and (2) to reconstruct its construction history through targeted soundings below the floors of the building.

Squares G4.08, G4.18, G4.19 and G4.28 (J. Kaado, E. Akça and E. Love; assisted by Z. Özdemir and M. Ilhan)

According to the Syro-Hittite Expedition's field records, a large, elevated rectangular platform, which they identified as Platform XV, was situated immediately to the north of Building XVI. The aim of the 2011 season therefore was to determine whether anything remained of this structure, and if so, to try and establish its architectural and stratigraphic relationship to the newly discovered temple (Building XVI) to the south. In his 1971 report, Haines describes a large platform that formed the eastern boundary of the *bit hilani* palace

compound in the West Central Area. This structure, 87 m x 46 m, was paved with ceramic tiles and supported by stone walls along its northern, eastern and southern perimeters. When the Chicago plan of the structure was geo-referenced to the Tayinat GIS base map, Platform XV appeared to be situated just north of the newly excavated temple, and possibly was even part of the same complex.

To further delineate the parameters of Platform XV, a geophysical survey was also conducted during the 2011 season, using both magnetometry and resistivity. These investigations succeeded in identifying the possible eastern and southern edges of the platform structure.

To ground truth and test the results of these investigations, trenches were opened in Squares G4.08, G4.18, G4.19 and G4.28 (**figs. 1, 3-4**). In all, the 2011 excavations succeeded in uncovering the southern edge of Platform XV, including portions of the stone enclosing wall, and an L-shaped section (2 X 20 m N-S and 2 X 9 m E-S) of the platform itself (**figs. 10-11**). In the area between Platform XV and Building XVI to the south, excavations uncovered an expanse of poorly preserved mud brick pavement (**fig. 12**). Two square-shaped concentrations of fired ceramic tiles, clearly the platforms (or floors) of small room-like installations, were found in this presumably open courtyard space. The eastern-most of the two had an intact drain hole made of interlocking ceramic pipes embedded in its center. Although the architectural relationships of these various structures and installations are not yet fully clear (Platform XV, for example, is aligned in a slightly offset orientation to Building XVI; see **figs. 3 and 13**), they undoubtedly belonged to a single complex that almost certainly dates to the Neo-Assyrian occupation of the site in the late 8th and 7th centuries BCE.

Squares G4.38 and G4.48 (A. Higginson)

During the 2011 season, two small probes were excavated below the floors of Building XVI to clarify its construction history, and determine something of its earlier stratigraphic

sequence. The first probe, in Square G4.48, took advantage of a hole in the stone pavement in front of the steps leading to the temple portico (**fig. 14**). The 1 X 1.3 m probe was excavated to a depth of 1.5 m, and delineated an alternating sequence of mud brick detris layers and sherds strewn surfaces dating to the Iron II (Red Slipped Burnish Ware was present throughout); Iron I pottery became more frequent in the lowest levels.

A second probe was excavated in the northwest corner of the central room of the temple (Square G4.38; see **fig. 14**). The aim of the probe was to determine the construction sequence of the temple, and to establish whether earlier floors or phases of the complex might exist. A cross-section was also cut through the west wall of the temple. Although earlier floors were not found, the probe and section produced clear evidence of two discrete construction phases to the west wall of the temple (**fig. 15**). A solid mud brick construction that extended across the entire section was all that remained of the earlier of the two phases. The feature was reminiscent of the large mud brick foundations that supported the walls of Building II excavated in Field 1, and very likely provided the same structural function for this earlier phase of Building XVI. This mud brick feature, in turn, was cut by a sharply delineated line marking a later foundation trench, which was filled with crumbly, nari-filled mud brick, a construction technique commonly used in the buildings of the Iron III, or Neo-Assyrian, settlement. This later foundation trench and superstructure surely represents the construction phase of the Neo-Assyrian temple (i.e., late 8th/early 7th century BCE). Since the construction methods used to build the west wall of the temple are sharply different from the ‘crib technique’ used in the production of its east wall, these two outer walls appear to preserve different phases in the temple’s construction history, with the eastern wall representing an earlier, pre-Assyrian (or Neo-Hittite) phase. The pier walls that separated the central room from the cella, which clearly abut the temple’s outer walls, therefore must also represent Neo-Assyrian renovations to the temple complex. At the end of the

season, the temple's north wall was observed to abut the northern end of the west wall, and to be made of the same nari-filled brick construction, indicating that this section of the temple was also built (or rebuilt) during the Neo-Assyrian period.

FIELD 6 EXCAVATIONS (E. DENEL AND Ö. DEMIRCI)

Excavations were initiated in the northeast quadrant of the upper mound in part to ground truth the results of geophysical prospecting conducted in this area during the 2010 season, but also to determine the accessibility of the Iron Age remains, in particular the Neo-Assyrian settlement, in this part of the citadel. The 2010 geophysical survey identified a positive anomaly in this area that appears to have been a large rectilinear structure. More focused geomagnetic and resistivity investigations were also conducted during the 2011 season. To test the results, two perpendicularly-oriented, 2.5 X 20 m trenches were opened in the hope that they might intersect the linear features of the geophysical anomaly. An E-W trench was opened in Squares E5.65 and E5.66, and an N-S trench in Squares E5.78 and E5.88, located to the east. This new excavation area was designated Field 6 (**fig. 1**).

Squares E5.65 and E5.66 (E. Denel; assisted by Ö. Ketkanlı)

Excavations were initiated in the northern part of Square E5.66, and promptly came down on a substantial mud brick structure, which extended across the entire 2.5 X 9 m trench. Consequently, the trench was extended to the west, along the northern edge of Square E5.65 (**figs. 16 and 17**).

The excavations in Square E5.65 succeeded in uncovering a succession of interconnected walls and associated surfaces, dating to the Iron II/III, which descended down slope to the west (**fig. 17**). A series of walls formed a room in the upper part of the east section of the trench that may be contemporary to the large structure in E5.66 to the east. A large, roughly-hewn rectangular limestone block appears to have been associated with this room. Although its

function is not clear, the top of the block contained a shallow depression, possibly a pivot hole, and therefore may have provided architectural support for the room or part of a larger complex associated with the massive wall excavated in E5.66. The soil layers associated with the earliest walls uncovered in the western section of the trench contained burnt ashy debris and high concentrations of pottery, slag, bone and other material culture, suggesting a midden-like depositional context for this area.

Squares E5.78 and E5.88 (Ö. Demirci; assisted by D. Erkut)

Excavations in the north-south trench were initiated in Square E5.78 (**fig. 18**). As in E5.66 to the west, the sounding quickly came down on an extensive mud brick wall or feature in the northern half of the trench, which presumably extends to the west and east. Fragmentary patches of white plastered surface material to the south of the mud brick feature, delineated in at least three superimposed layers, suggest that this area functioned as an open courtyard. Probes below this surface produced an alternating sequence of mud brick and ashy deposits. The associated pottery included Red Slip Burnished Ware, Cypro-Geometric Ware, White Painted Ware, and Common (or Local) Painted Ware, and strongly resembled the assemblage from the large Iron III complex excavated in Field 5 to the south.

The north-south trench was extended to the south, into Square E5.88, in the hope of clarifying the structural remains uncovered in E5.78. As in E5.78, the excavations in E5.88 uncovered a large wall, presumably also oriented E-W, in the southern half of the trench. To the north, excavations uncovered a series of walls, forming a room that appeared to lean against the large wall to the south. The room contained circular installations and concentrations of ashy material, suggesting a food preparation or production area. The associated pottery was typical of the Iron II/III period. However, somewhat surprisingly, a sounding in the northern part of the trench uncovered high concentrations of pottery, all dating to the Iron I and Early Bronze Age.

While probably the remains of a large fill, it is possible that this material is part of an intact deposit that preserves an earlier, pre-Iron II cultural stratum that had been cut during the construction of the Iron II/III complex.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The Tayinat Archaeological Project investigations have continued to uncover the remarkably well-preserved remains of the long succession of Early Bronze and Early Iron Age settlements at Tell Tayinat. The Field 1 excavations have now uncovered a substantial (almost 300 sq m in area)—and expanding—section of the terminal EB IVB (or Amuq Phase J; ca. 2250-2000 BCE) settlement beneath the previously excavated Iron I strata, with ceramic evidence indicating that earlier EBA phases still lie below.

In Field 2, the expansion of excavations to the north of Building XVI has revealed the sprawling expanse of the Neo-Assyrian religious complex, or ‘sacred precinct’, in this area, including now the elevated Platform XV first discovered by the Syro-Hittite Expedition, which appears to have been integrated with the temple building to the south. Excavations within Building XVI itself have now further clarified the complex construction history of this structure, distinguishing the earlier Neo-Hittite construction from the subsequent Neo-Assyrian renovations.

The exploratory sounding to the south of the temple, meanwhile, quite unexpectedly revealed the remains of what appears to have been a gate complex that provided access to the citadel during the Iron II, or Neo-Hittite period (ca. 9th-8th centuries BCE), when Tayinat flourished as Kunulua, royal city of the Neo-Hittite Kingdom of Patina. Even more spectacular are the pristine remains of the large basalt lion that almost certainly once graced the entry way to this citadel gate complex. This impressive creature, which would have presented an awe-inspiring—if not intimidating—presence in the gateway, clearly was the product of a local,

indigenous sculptural tradition that predated the arrival of the Assyrians. The new Tayinat lion, together with the stylistically similar double-lion column base in Building II, thus provide valuable new insight into the innovative character and cultural sophistication of the diminutive Syro-Hittite states that emerged in the eastern Mediterranean in the aftermath of the collapse of the great civilizational powers of the Bronze Age at the end of the second millennium BCE.

As first noted in 2010, the renewed geophysical survey has identified numerous promising features, most notably a series of large structures on the upper mound. The 2011 season further demonstrated the value of employing a joint strategy of geophysical prospection and targeted excavation. In addition to the assistance it provided delineating the parameters of Platform XV in Field 2, the geophysical survey successfully identified the substantial mud brick structures, very likely part of the Late Assyrian settlement, that were uncovered in the northeast quadrant of the upper mound by the excavations initiated in the new Field 6.

Finally, considerable time and effort was devoted to the ongoing analysis and conservation of the extensive artifact assemblages that have been uncovered in the course of recent excavation seasons, and in particular the wealth of small finds recovered from the inner sanctum of the Field 2 temple (Building XVI). This effort included the continued conservation and study of the cache of cuneiform tablets found on the temple podium, which are now housed in the Antakya Archaeological Museum.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2011 Tayinat Archaeological Project field season was supported by a research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC), and funding provided by the University of Toronto. I wish to thank the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums for authorizing permission to conduct the excavations, and the Tayinat landowners, in particular the Kuseyri family, for graciously accommodating our excavations on their land. I would also like to thank Mr. Mustafa Baysal who, as government representative, was a valuable liaison with local authorities, as well as Ms. Nalan Yastı, Director of the Antakya Archaeological Museum, who generously permitted us to work on the cuneiform tablets in the museum, and the staff of the museum for their attentive help and assistance with this conservation effort. The season's successful results would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of all our project staff.

Tell Tayinat Excavations

Field 4

Field 2

Field 6

Field 5

Field 1

Field 3

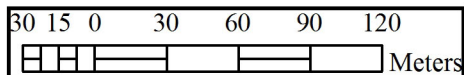
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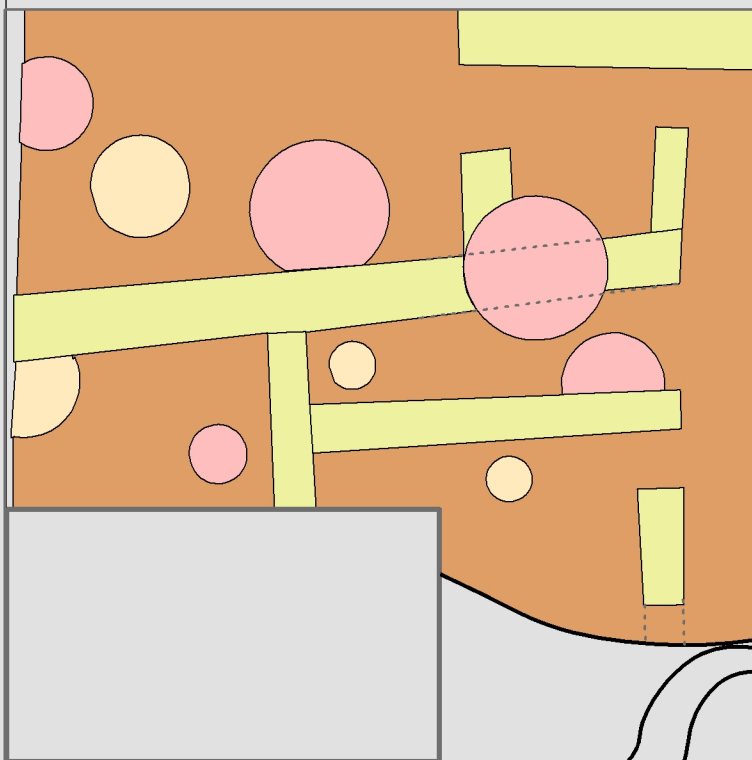
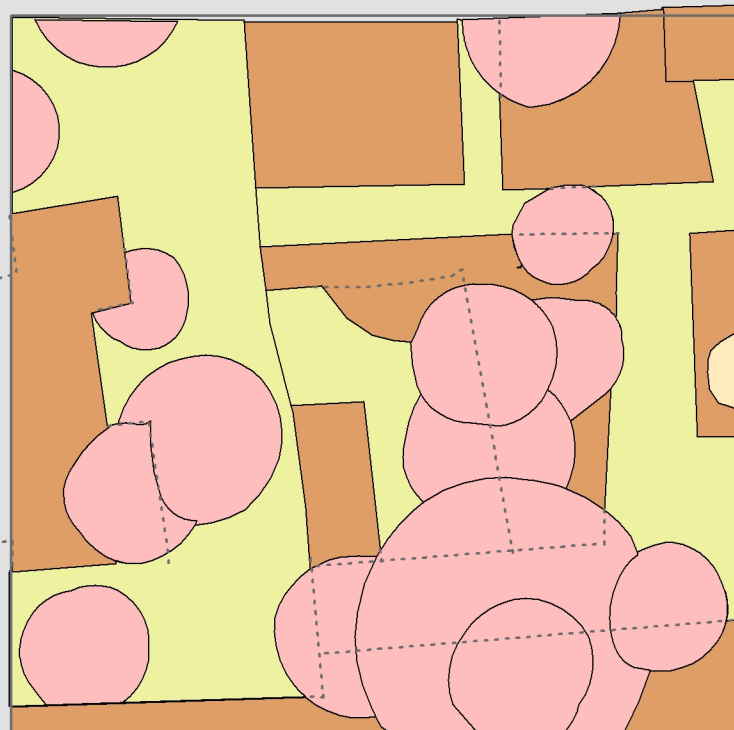
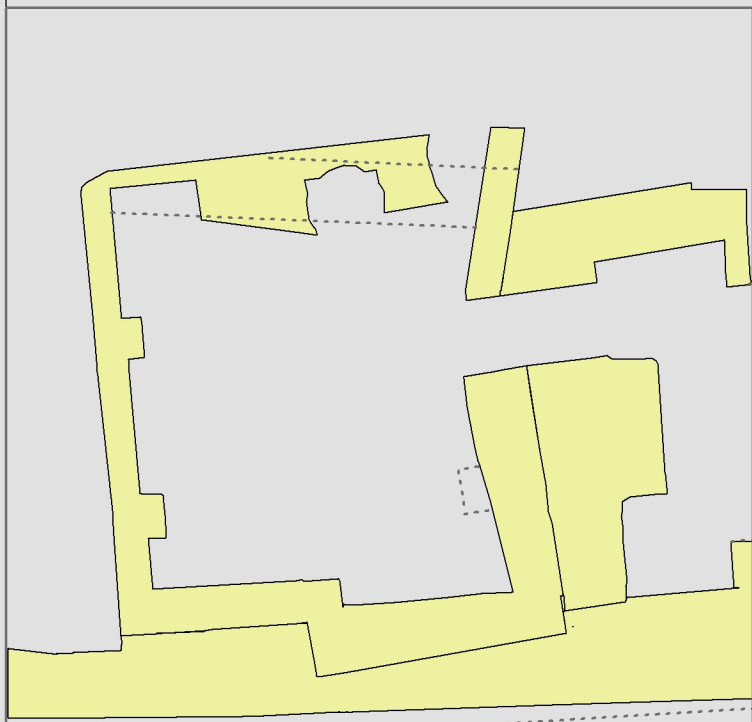
tayinat_contour

Excavation Squares

Previous Excavations

Future Excavations





Legend













- Tabun
- Mudbrick Walls
- Fill
- Pits



0 1 2 3 4 Meters

Legend

MB Platform

-  Stones
-  MB Tiles
-  MB Tiles Reconstructed
-  MB
-  Temple MB
-  MB Reconstructed
-  Mortar
-  Plaster
-  Stairs
-  Column Base
-  Altar
-  Objects



0 2.5 5 7.5 10

Meters







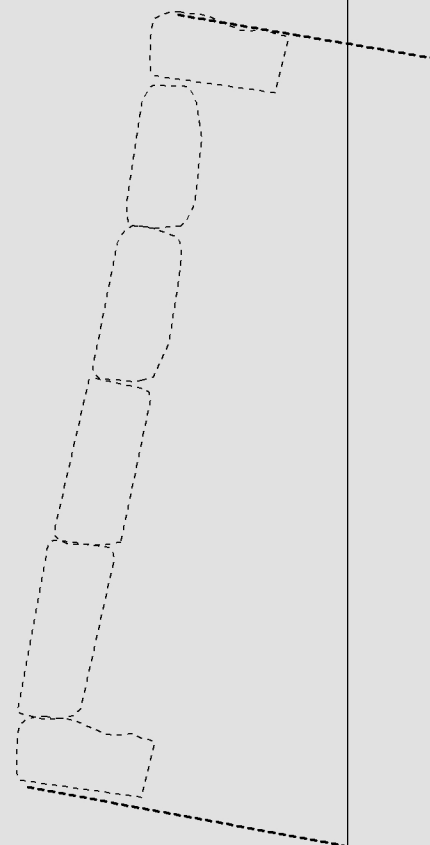
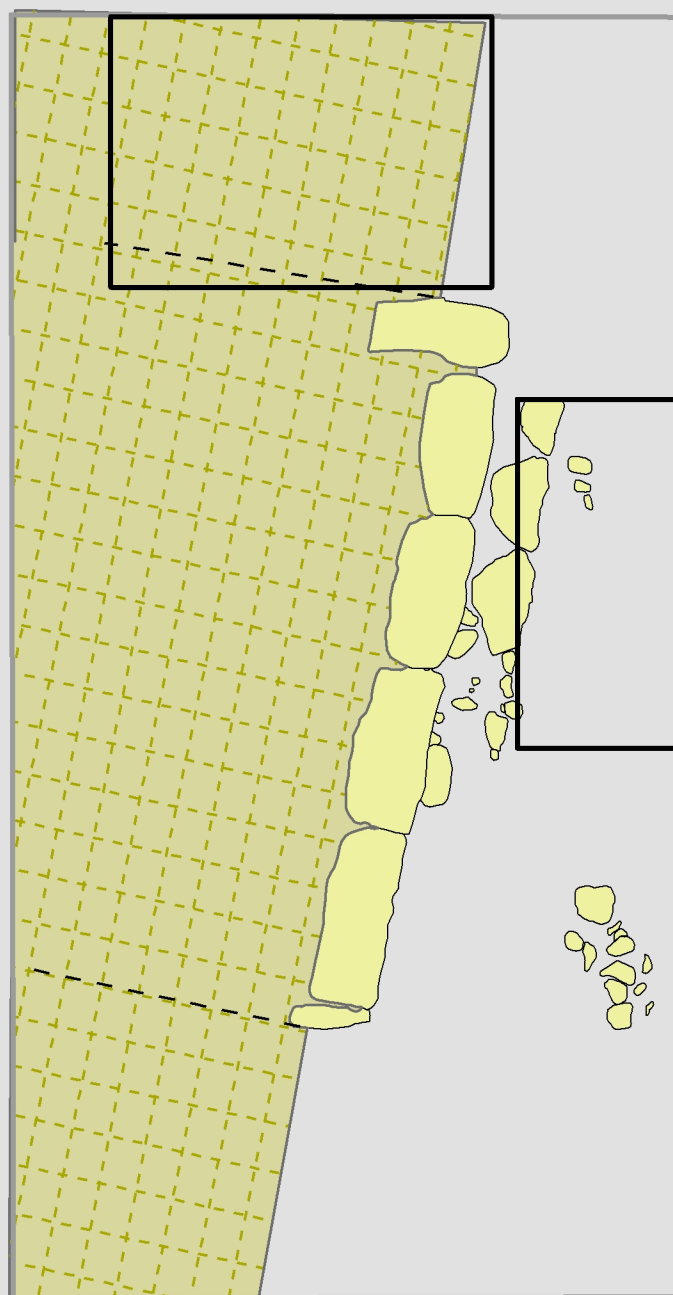
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Gate

- Stones
- MB Tiles
- MB Tiles Reconstructed
- MB
- MB Reconstructed
- Mortar
- Plaster
- Stairs
- Column Base
- Altar
- Objects



0 1 2 Meters











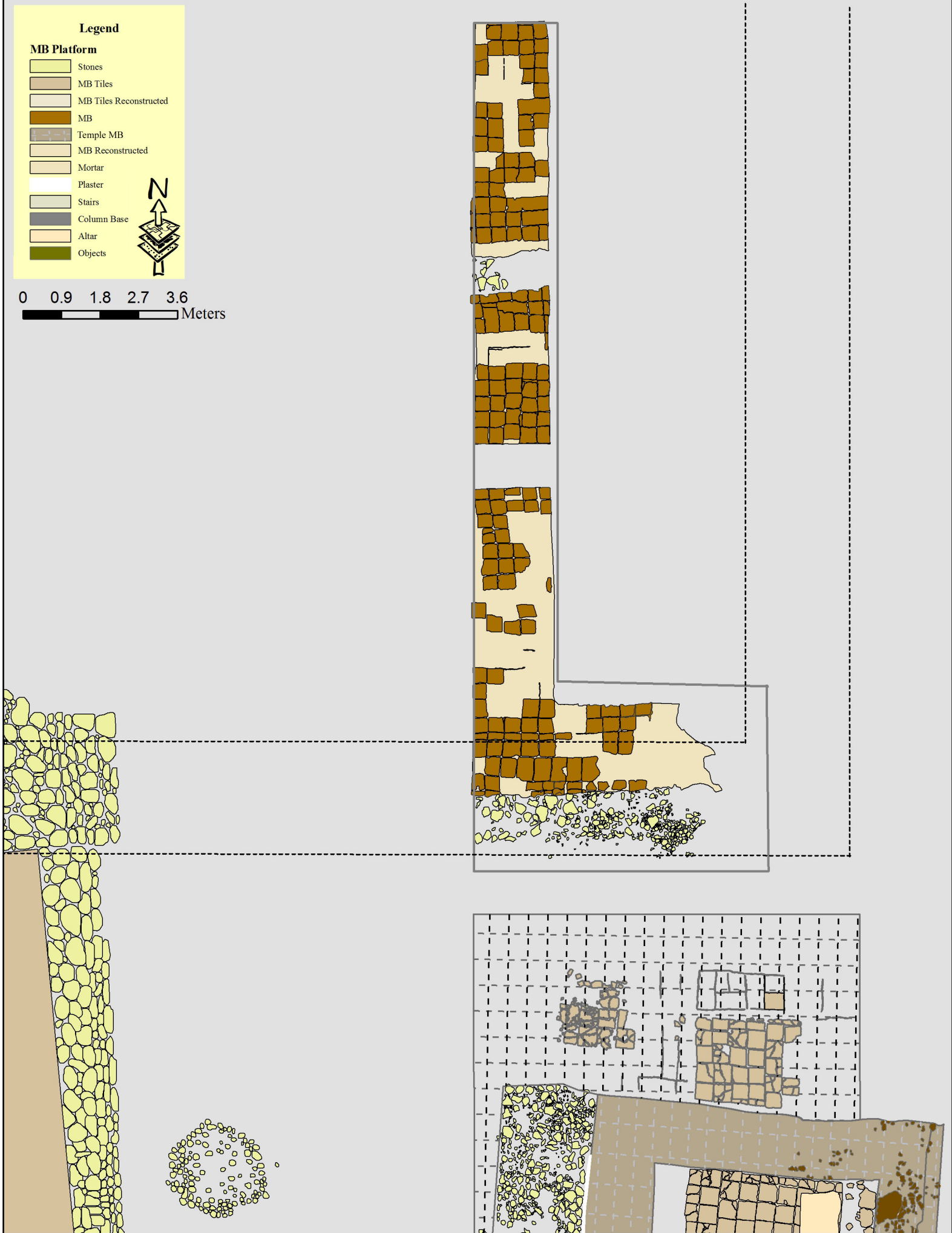
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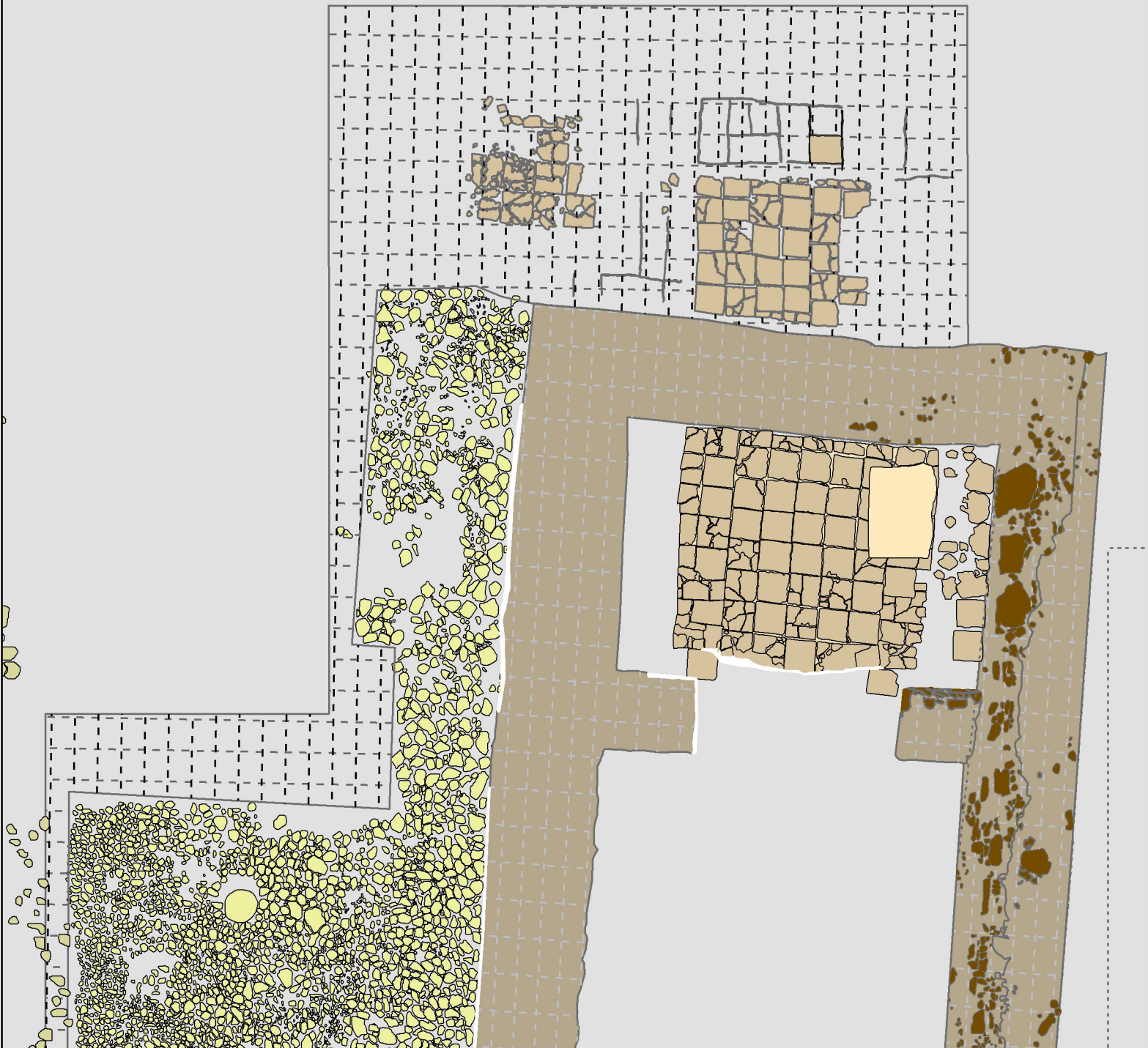
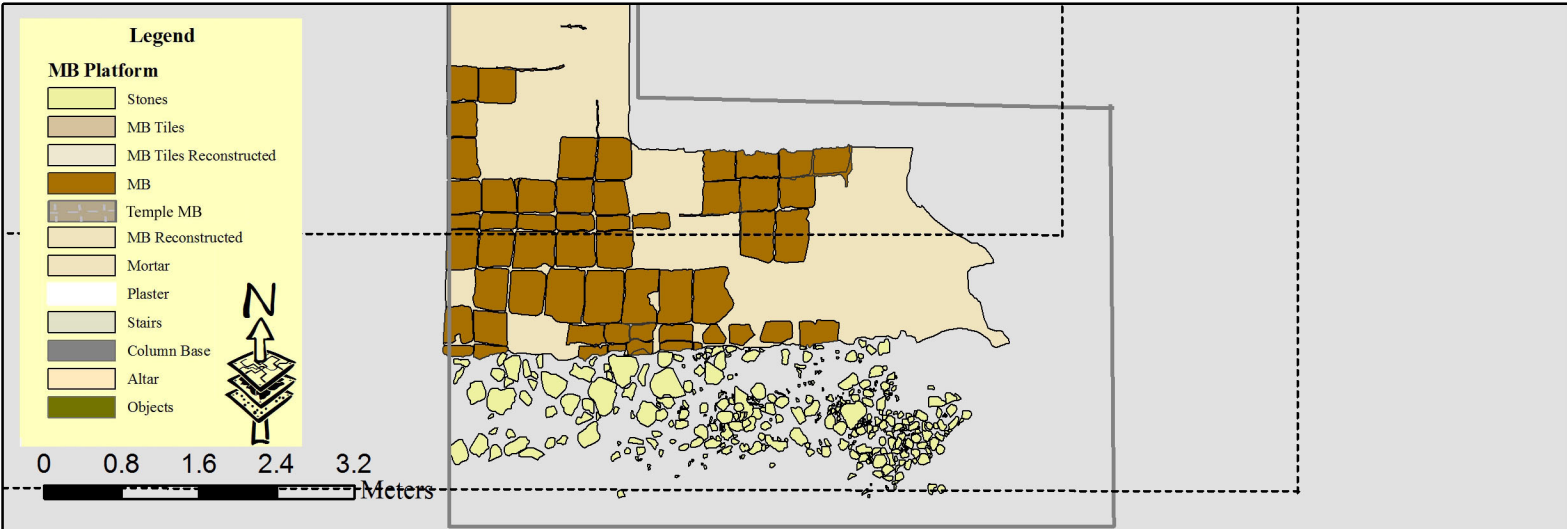
MB Platform

- Stones
- MB Tiles
- MB Tiles Reconstructed
- MB
- Temple MB
- MB Reconstructed
- Mortar
- Plaster
- Stairs
- Column Base
- Altar
- Objects

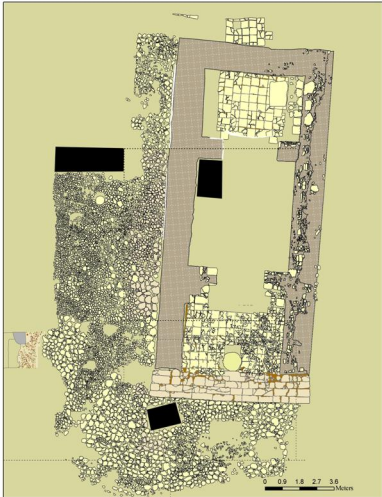


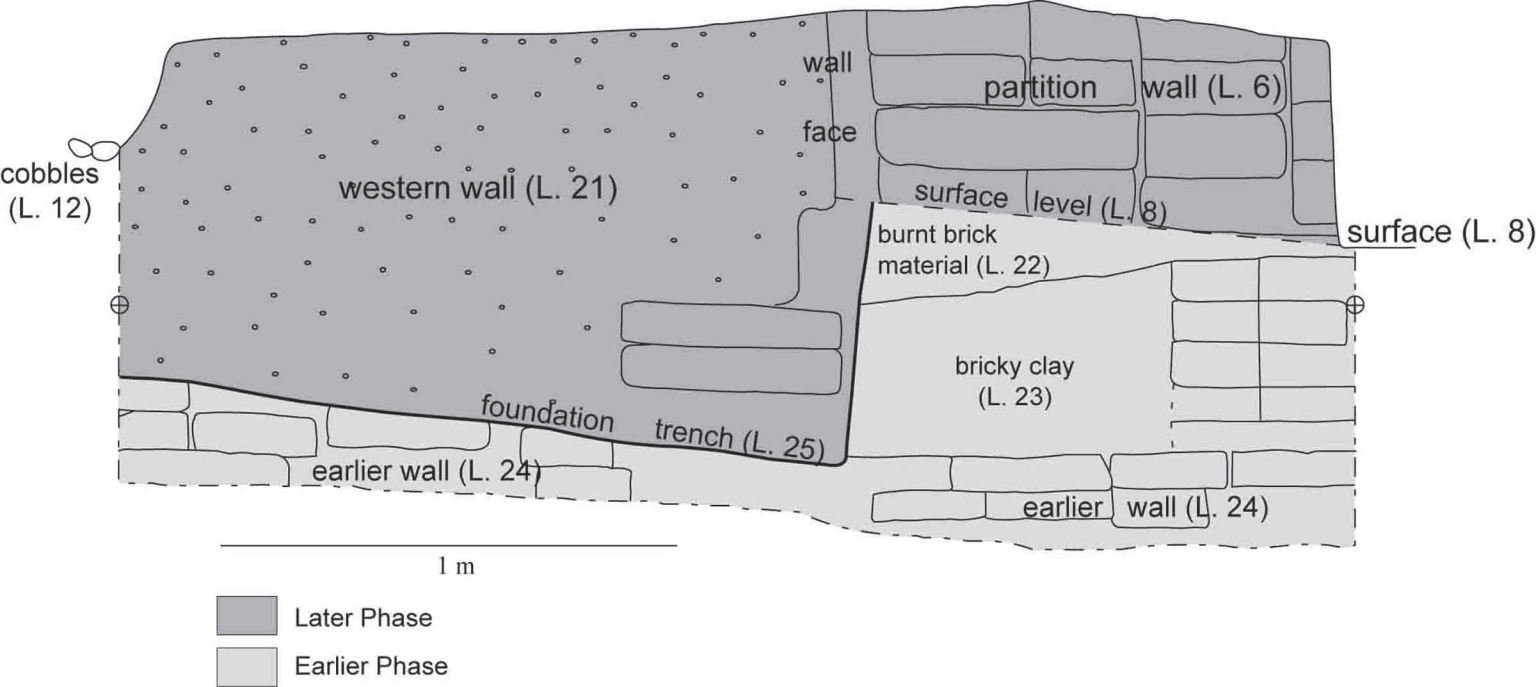
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


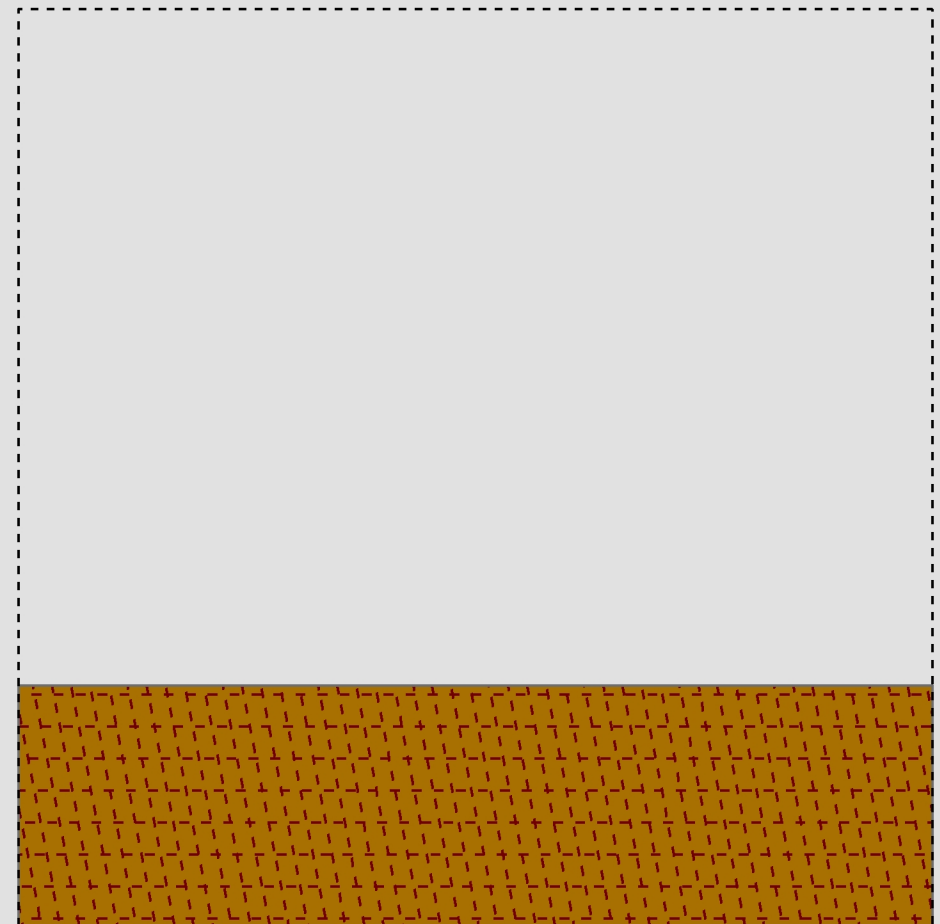
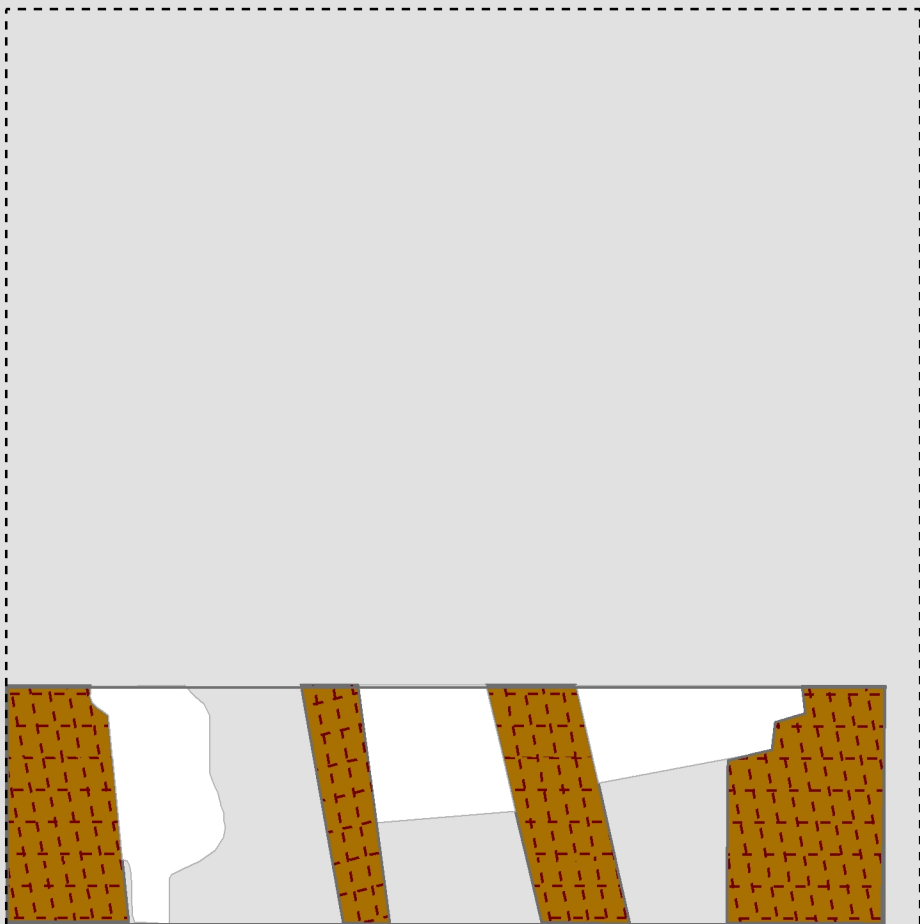
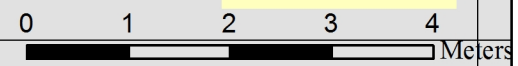


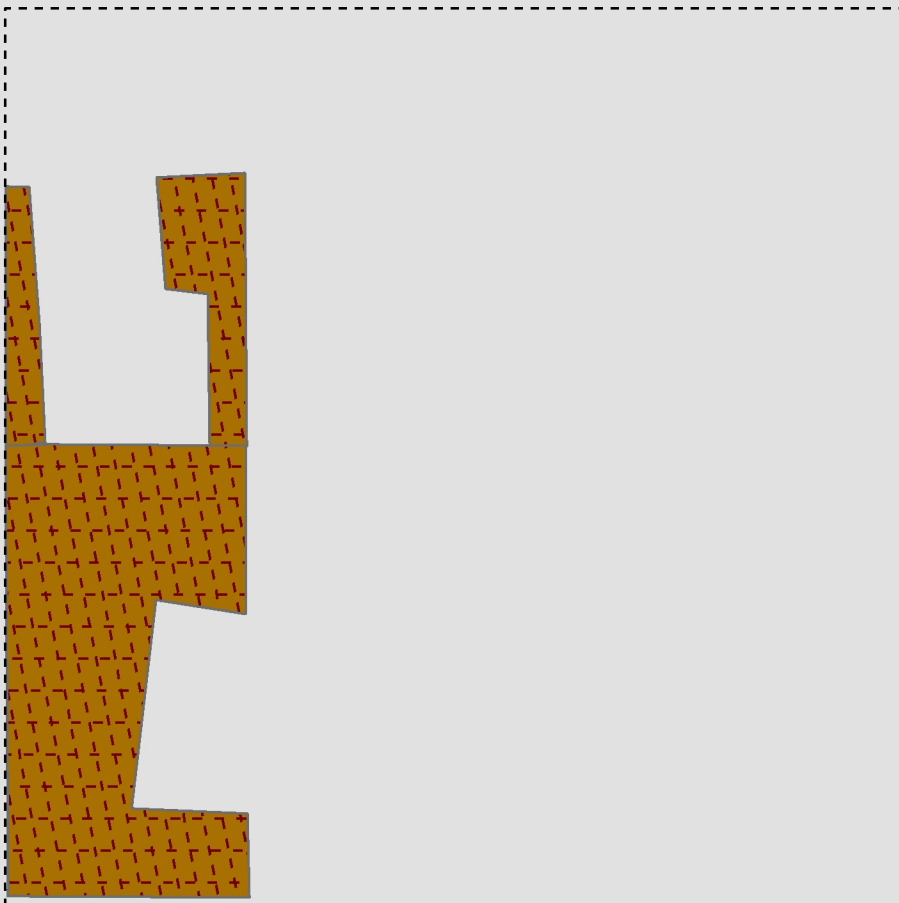
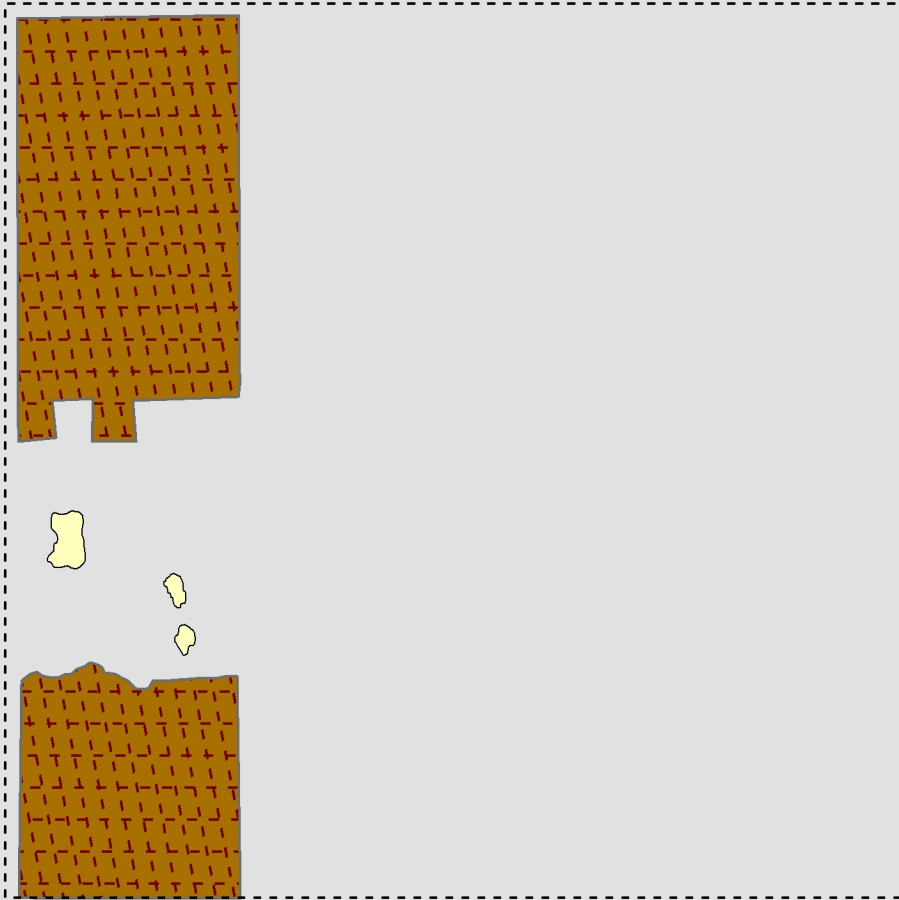






Legend

-  Surface
-  Mudbrick





Legend

-  Stones
-  Mudbrick