

**TAYINAT ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT  
2008 SEASONAL REPORT**

[Not for Publication]

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## INTRODUCTION

The Tayinat Archaeological Project (TAP) completed its fifth season of excavations at Tell Tayinat in 2008, conducted between June 15 and August 31. The expedition senior staff consisted of Dr. Timothy Harrison (Project Director), Dr. Stephen Batiuk (Senior Field Archaeologist), Fiona Haughey (Artifact Illustrator), Julie Unruh (Conservator), Susan Harrison (Photographer) and Kim Harrison (Camp Manager). The senior Field Supervisors were Dr. Jack Dessel (University of Tennessee), Dr. Elif Denel (Middle Eastern Technical University), James Osborne (Harvard University), James Roames (University of Toronto) and Lynn Welton (University of Toronto). The project was also assisted by sixteen archaeology students from Bilkent University, Galatasaray University, Harvard University, Koç University, Mustafa Kemal University, the University of Toronto, the University 'Ca' Foscari, and UCLA. Ms. Asuman Arslan served as government representative on behalf of the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums.

The primary objectives of the 2008 TAP field season were to (1) complete excavation of the Early Iron Age levels in Field 1, and expand the exposure of Early Bronze Age levels, (2) continue excavation of the large Early Iron Age complex in Field 2, first uncovered in 2005, (3) complete excavation of the Early Iron Age metal workshop in Field 4, on the western slope of the upper mound, and (4) open a new area, Field 5, along the eastern edge of the high mound (**fig. 1**).

### **Field 1 Investigations (L. Welton, Field Supervisor)**

The excavations in Field 1 (**fig. 2**) continued the investigations begun in 2004, which were expanded to four 10x10 m squares (G4.55, G4.56, G4 65 and G4.66) in 2005, and have continued annually since then. In all, the Field 1 excavations have now identified nine architecturally distinct Field Phases (FP), with the primary sequence (FPs 3-6) dating to the Early Iron Age. In 2008, excavations were conducted only in Squares G4.55 and G4.56. The primary objectives of the 2008 season were to complete excavation of the Early Iron Age levels, and expand the exposure of the Early Bronze Age levels, specifically the late third millennium, or Amuq Phase J, cultural horizon.

#### ***Square G4.55 (L. Welton and M. Hinman)***

The Early Iron Age levels in Square G4.55 were completely removed in 2007. As a result, the 2008 excavations were able to focus exclusively on the Early Bronze Age levels. During the 2007 season, a series of pre-Iron Age walls were identified, and assigned to Field Phase 8. The primary goal of the 2008 season, therefore, was to define these walls and excavate the fill within the rooms they formed, and thereby begin to document the first substantial EBA cultural stratum uncovered thus far at Tayinat. At least two architectural phases (FPs 8 and 9) were uncovered during the season (**fig. 2**).

The later of these two phases, FP 8, was represented by the following walls: G4.55:258, 245, 210, 264, 212, 213, 266 and probably also 214. In the southern portions of the square, it appeared that G4.55:264 and 212 were both east-west walls, but offset slightly in the form of a dogleg (**fig. 3**). There may have been an attempt to straighten out this dogleg through the

application of additional mud bricks to the northern face of Wall G4.55:264, although this appears to have been a relatively late attempt. It was not clear whether these walls cut into pre-existing deposits, and therefore were at least partially submerged, or were freestanding. Nevertheless, the soil loci within the 'room' formed by Walls G4.55:210, 264 and 213 clearly sealed against these walls, and therefore were later in date.

The loci assigned to the earliest field phase identified thus far, FP 9, were located primarily to the east of Wall G4.55:210. They include Walls G4.55:211, 265, and 215, as well as possibly Walls G4.55:262 and 230. The brickwork of the walls in this phase was difficult to delineate. The pottery associated with FPs 8 and 9 is characteristic of the Amuq Phase J horizon, and included Simple and Painted Simple Wares, Smearred Washed Wares, and a limited amount of Brittle Orange Ware.

### ***Square G4.56 (D. Lumb and L. Di Pieri)***

The primary aim of the 2008 season in Square G4.56, the fourth season conducted thus far in the square, was to complete excavation of the Early Iron Age levels. Although increasing amounts of Early Bronze Age (EBA) pottery was encountered over the course of the season, no clearly discernable EBA levels were reached by the end of the season. Thus the primary focus continued to be articulation and removal of the substantial Early Iron Age remains preserved in this square.

In all, a variety of fragmentary structures associated with FPs 4 through 6 were further documented during the 2008 season. In particular, they included more of the large pits uncovered in previous seasons, typically lined with phytolithic material and identified as storage silos. Several contained large numbers (or 'hoards') of the now characteristic non-perforated loom weights, or spool weights (**fig. 4**), further emphasizing the importance of textile production in this area during the Early Iron Age.

### **Field 2 Investigations (J. Osborne, Field Supervisor)**

Field 2 is primarily occupied by a large, Early Iron II structure that is probably Building XIV, partially excavated by the Syro-Hittite Expedition in the 1930s. The field is located immediately to the north of Field 1 (**fig. 1**). Excavations have been conducted continuously in Field 2 since the 2005 season. The primary objectives in Field 2 have been two-fold: (1) to establish the stratigraphic connections between Fields 1 and 2, and determine the depth of Building XIV's foundations, and (2) to obtain as broad a horizontal exposure of this complex as possible.

The 2008 season continued the investigations of previous seasons, but saw a shift in strategy, with two new squares, G4.38 and 48, opened along the eastern edge of the field. It was hoped that disturbance from the Syro-Hittite Expedition's investigations would be minimal in this area, and the stratigraphic sequence therefore would be relatively more intact. Quite unexpectedly, both squares revealed the well-preserved remains of what appears to have been a temple, oriented southward, and without doubt one of the most important discoveries of the TAP project to date (**fig. 5**).

*Squares G4.38 (A. Lanham, J. Lehner) and G4.48 (G. Cinar and S. Montagner)*

The temple structure was approached from the south via a stone-paved staircase (**figs. 6-7**), comprised of four steps, and constructed with long, thin, dressed limestone blocks. A small basalt column rested on the western edge of the staircase, just in front of the southern end of the building's western wall (**figs. 8-9**). The building's eastern wall remains unexcavated, but appears to be visible in the east balk of Square G4.48.

The staircase led to a porticoed entrance, or porch, to the building, paved with square baked bricks (40 x 40 cm), laid out in rows of twelve. Partially submerged in the middle of the brick surface was the single most exciting find of the season: a nearly intact, ornately carved basalt column base, similar—if not identical—to the column bases which graced the entrance to Building I, the *bit hilani* palace uncovered by the Syro-Hittite Expedition just to the west (**figs. 8 and 10**). The column base was embedded in the paved brick surface, with its lowest carved register largely hidden from view, suggesting that an earlier surface, or phase to the building may still lie below.

The porch was separated from an internal room to the north by two mud brick piers. A thick layer of burnt brick, apparently collapse, covered much of the floor between the two piers. This material, in turn, sealed three heavily charred wooden beams, at least one of which appeared to have been set into clay brick material. Two large segments were removed for dendrochronological analysis. It was not clear whether the beams represented roof or wall collapse, or were part of a threshold for the doorway.

The doorway provided entrance to a partially excavated inner room. A second set of piers, framed in the north balk of Square G4.38, indicated the northern extent of the room, and the existence of a second room, perhaps the cella of the temple, in the unexcavated area to the north. The eastern extent of the room, and of the building, lay outside the area excavated this season.

The floor of this central room was badly burned, but appeared to have had a plastered surface, which was preserved only in patches. The collapse above the floor contained burnt brick debris, but was largely devoid of pottery or organic remains. However, the room did produce a substantial quantity of bronze metal, including riveted pieces, and several carved ivory fragments. Though heavily burned, and damaged, these remains suggest the room had been equipped with furniture or wall fixings.

The temple was surrounded, at least on its west and south sides, by a cobble and flagstone pavement, while the exterior face of the building's west wall was decorated with a bright white plaster.

Significantly, several hieroglyphic Luwian fragments were found scattered on this stone pavement. Moreover, it was possible to link some of the stones in the pavement south of the temple entrance directly to a section of pavement uncovered by the Syro-Hittite Expedition in their eastern probe, excavated at the end of their final season in 1938. Their probe also uncovered what appears to have been a foundation, or platform, roughly square in shape and built of finely-dressed basalt orthostats, perhaps for a free-standing monument (**fig. 11**). The Expedition also

reported finding numerous hieroglyphic Luwian fragments in the vicinity, and it is tempting to suggest that these all came from a single monument which once stood on the platform. Unfortunately, what remained of this structure was removed, or destroyed, following the Chicago excavations. This area will be the focus of excavations in the 2009 season.

#### **Field 4 Investigations (J. Roames, Field Supervisor; E. Özbakkaloğlu)**

An Early Iron Age metal workshop was uncovered in G3.34, located on the western edge of the upper mound (**fig. 1**), during the 2006 and 2007 seasons. A large pit at the eastern end of the square containing metalworking debris and a room filled with metalworking remains that appeared to continue eastward into G3.35, suggested there might be remains of metalworking activity in G3.35. Thus, the decision was made to open G3.35 during the 2008 season, and eventually also G3.24, in order to delineate the parameters of the Early Iron Age metal workshop in this area, designated Field 4. However, no metalworking remains were found in either G3.24 or G3.35. Thus the extent of the metal workshop appears to have been confined to G3.34. Nevertheless, two significant discoveries were made: (1) a well-preserved stone-paved surface, and (2) the location of T-5, a trench cut by the Syro-Hittite Expedition across the site's western defensive system.

The stone pavement, found in G3.35, covered the northern portion of the square (**figs. 12-14**). It ascended toward the west balk, ending just below the surface of the mound, and just before reaching the west balk, and it extended eastward into the east balk, toward the center of the upper mound, and in the direction of the Syro-Hittite Expedition's Courtyard VIII. The associated pottery dated the pavement to the Iron II. It is not clear whether the pavement might have formed part of a street, and perhaps approached a gate in the western defenses, or was simply another portion of the pavement that covered the central courtyard of the West Central Area. Further investigations, including remote sensing, are planned for this area in future field seasons.

#### **Field 5 Investigations (J.P. Dessel, Field Supervisor)**

A new field, Field 5, was opened on the east side of the upper mound in 2008 (**fig. 1**). The excavations in this area were aimed at uncovering the archaeological sequence in this part of the site, which was not investigated by the Syro-Hittite Expedition, particularly the Iron II and later phases of the site's occupational history. Two 10 x 10 m squares were opened, Squares F5.98 and 99, and it is anticipated that additional squares will be opened in future seasons, both on the summit of the mound and as part of a step trench down the eastern slope, stratigraphically linking the upper and lower mounds of the site.

#### ***Squares F5.98 (E. Denel and Ö. Ketkanli) and F5.99 (O. Demirci and E. Hammer)***

The 2008 excavations in Squares F5.98 and 99 revealed part of a large building, possibly the remains of a Late Assyrian courtyard-style house (**figs. 15-16**). More specifically, the excavations uncovered three small rooms that flank the north side of a larger room, possibly the internal courtyard of the building. Patches of the courtyard floor were found intact, and the base of a large pithos was found embedded near the west balk of Square F5.99 (**fig. 17**), suggesting that it would have been located near the center of the courtyard. The walls of the three side

rooms were covered with bright white plaster, and in places were preserved to more than 1 m in height (**fig. 18**). The western and eastern-most side rooms were entered through doorways formed by slightly protruding piers. The central room was entered from the western room through a third doorway.

The eastern extent of the building was not well-preserved, due largely to slope erosion, but a broad north-south wall that ran through Square F5.99 might have formed the eastern extent of the building. Dense concentrations of pottery and bone formed a substantial midden against the external, eastern, face of this wall, in the northern portion of the square. Concentrations of mud brick, possibly part of a wall, intersected with the eastern face of this north-south wall.

The associated pottery recovered from the floors of the building's rooms included Cypro-Geometric and Cypro-Phoenician imports, possible Assyrian Palace Ware (or a local imitation?), as well as Red Slipped Burnished Wares and local coarse wares typically dated to the late 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. A large clay rim fragment, found in one of the northern side rooms, may have been part of an Assyrian-style ceramic 'bathtub'.

### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

In summary, the 2008 Tayinat Archaeological Project (TAP) excavations continued to uncover the remarkably well-preserved remains of the Early Bronze and Iron Age settlements at Tell Tayinat. In Field 1, excavations below the Iron Age levels have now begun to uncover substantial remains from the terminal phases of the Early Bronze Age, specifically the EB IVB, or Amuq Phase J, with ceramic evidence indicating that earlier EBA phases still lie below. In keeping with the results of the soundings conducted by Robert Braidwood, as part of the Syro-Hittite Expedition, the TAP excavations suggest the existence of a substantial EBA sequence at Tayinat. Consequently, this area will be the focus of continued excavations in future field seasons.

The 2008 excavations also continued to reveal the impressive remains of Iron Age Tayinat. In addition to the Early Iron I (12<sup>th</sup> Cent. BCE) settlement in Field 1, with its strong Aegean cultural connections, the 2008 season uncovered the monumental structures of a temple in Field 2, which most probably dates to the Iron II (9<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Cent. BCE). Although still ongoing, our investigations suggest this latter complex was contemporary, at least in its final phase, with the *bit hilani* palaces (in particular Building I) and the *megaron*-style temple (Building II) excavated by the Syro-Hittite Expedition, which formed the royal residence of the Neo-Hittite kings of the Kingdom of Padastin/Patina. The numerous Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions that have been found at Tell Tayinat, which now total almost 100 when both the Syro-Hittite Expedition and the TAP excavations are combined, almost certainly should be assigned to this cultural horizon.

Meanwhile, the possible existence of a gateway in Field 4, and the discovery of a well-preserved Iron II complex in Field 5, both attest to the rich archaeological potential of these largely unexplored areas of the site. The Tayinat Archaeological Project, therefore, will also continue to prioritize its efforts and resources in these areas of the site.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# The 2008 Tell Tayinat Excavations

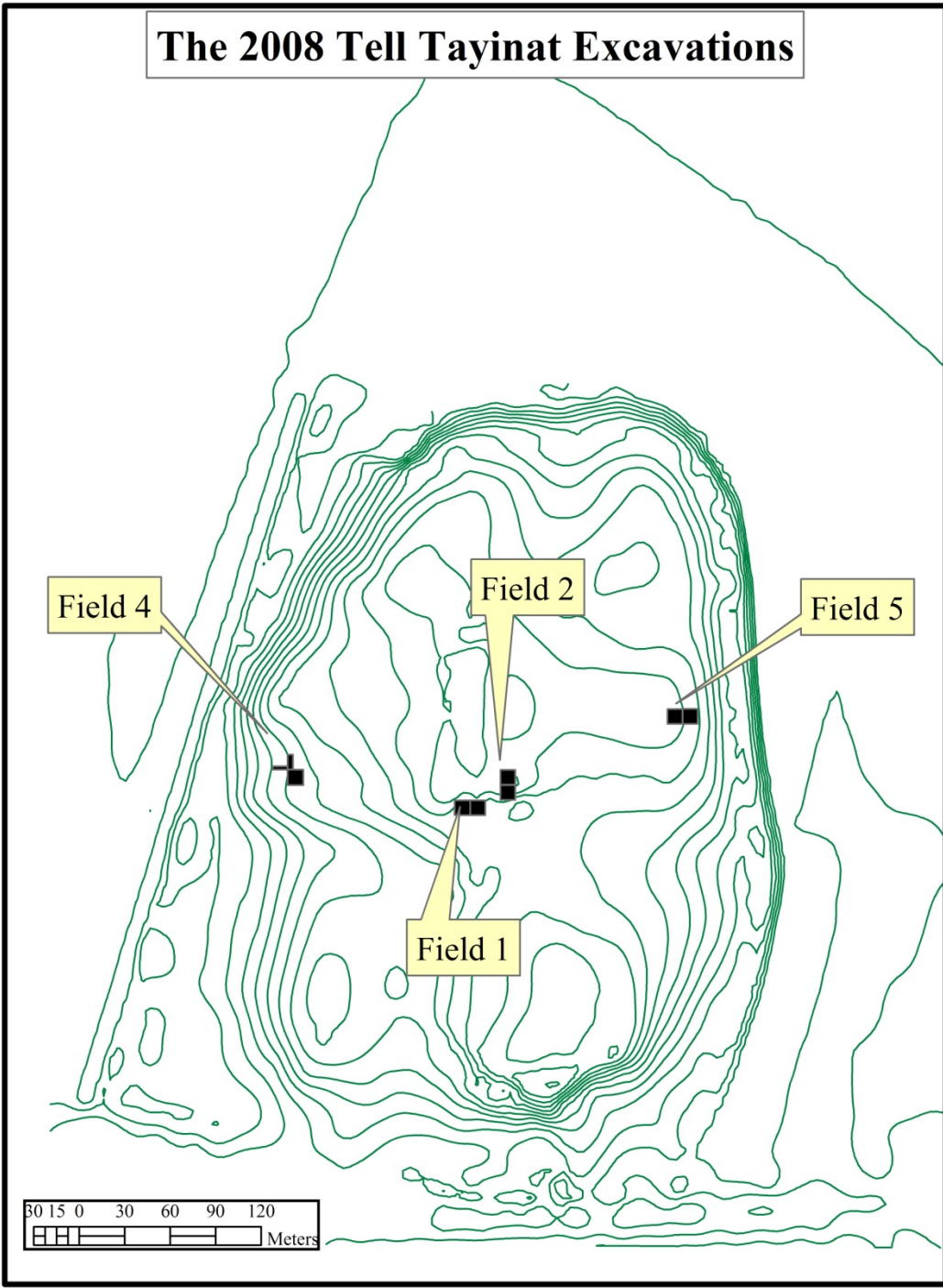


Figure 1



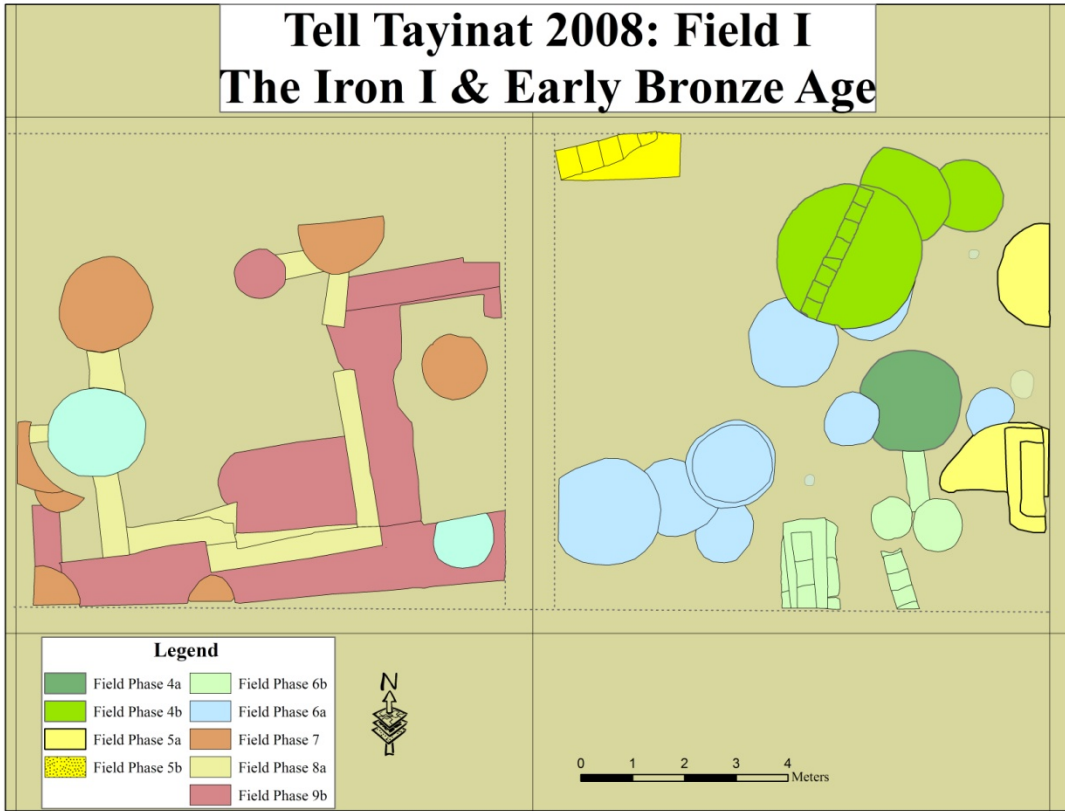


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

# Tell Tayinat 2008: Field II

## Early Iron II Temple



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10

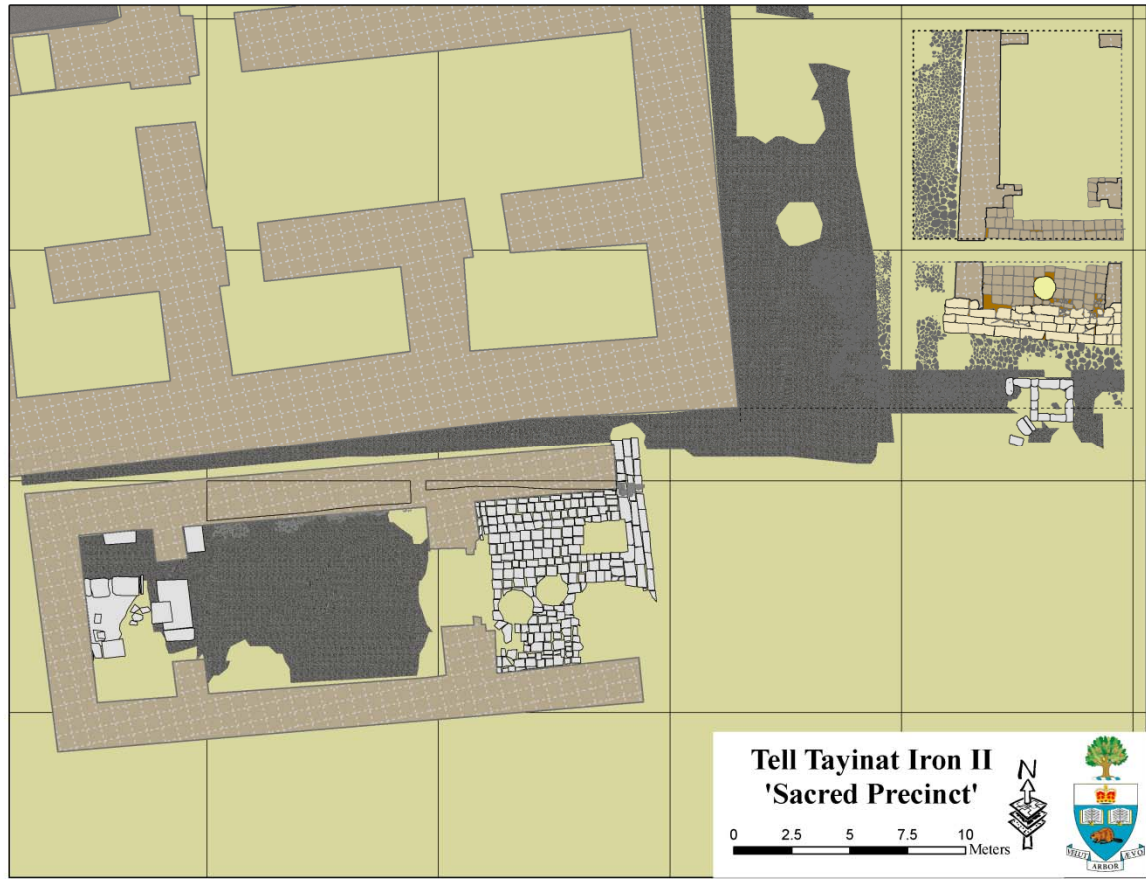


Figure 1

# Tell Tayinat 2008: Field IV

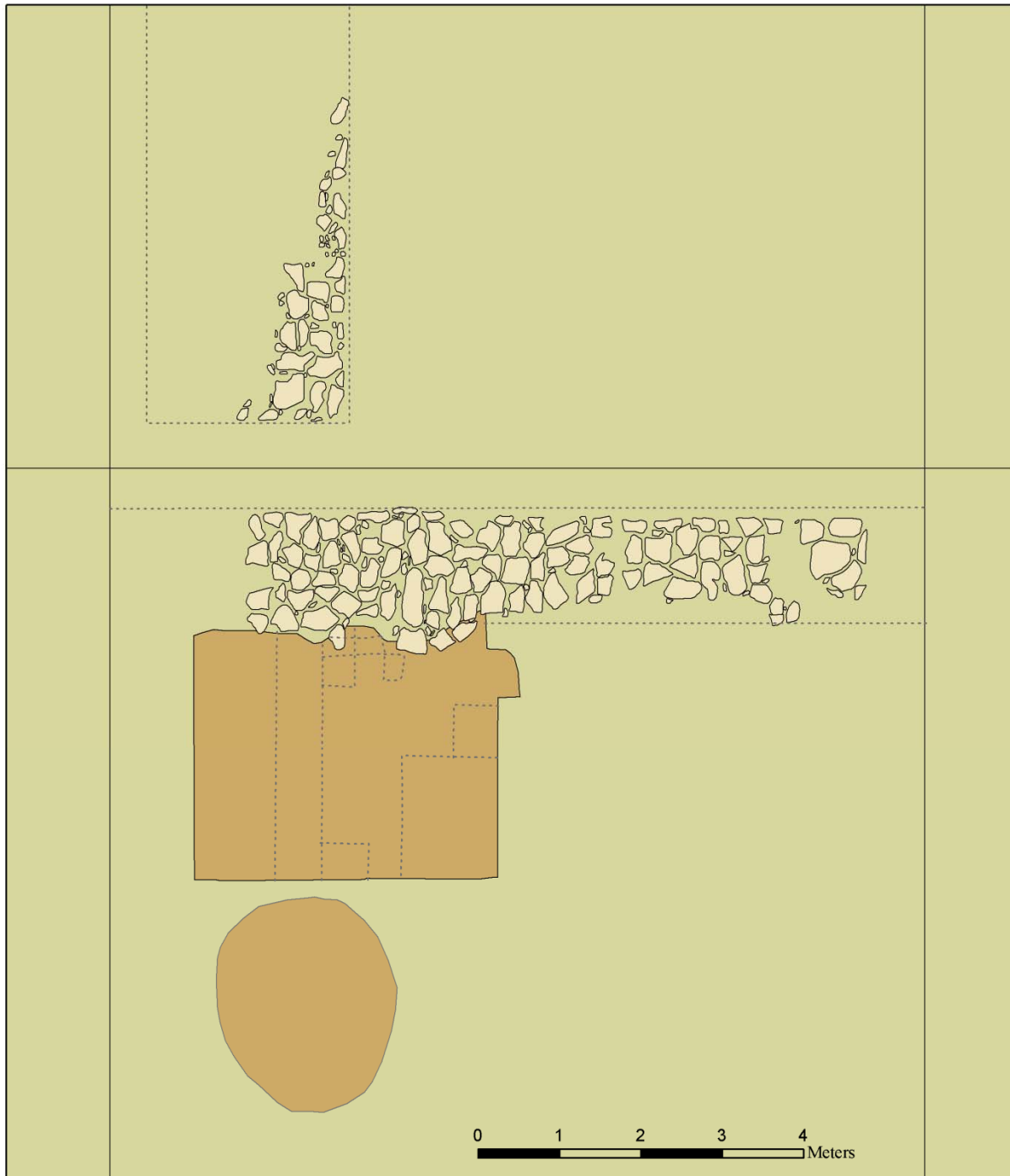


Figure 12





Figure 13



Figure 14

# Tell Tayinat 2008: Field V Iron II 'Courtyard House'

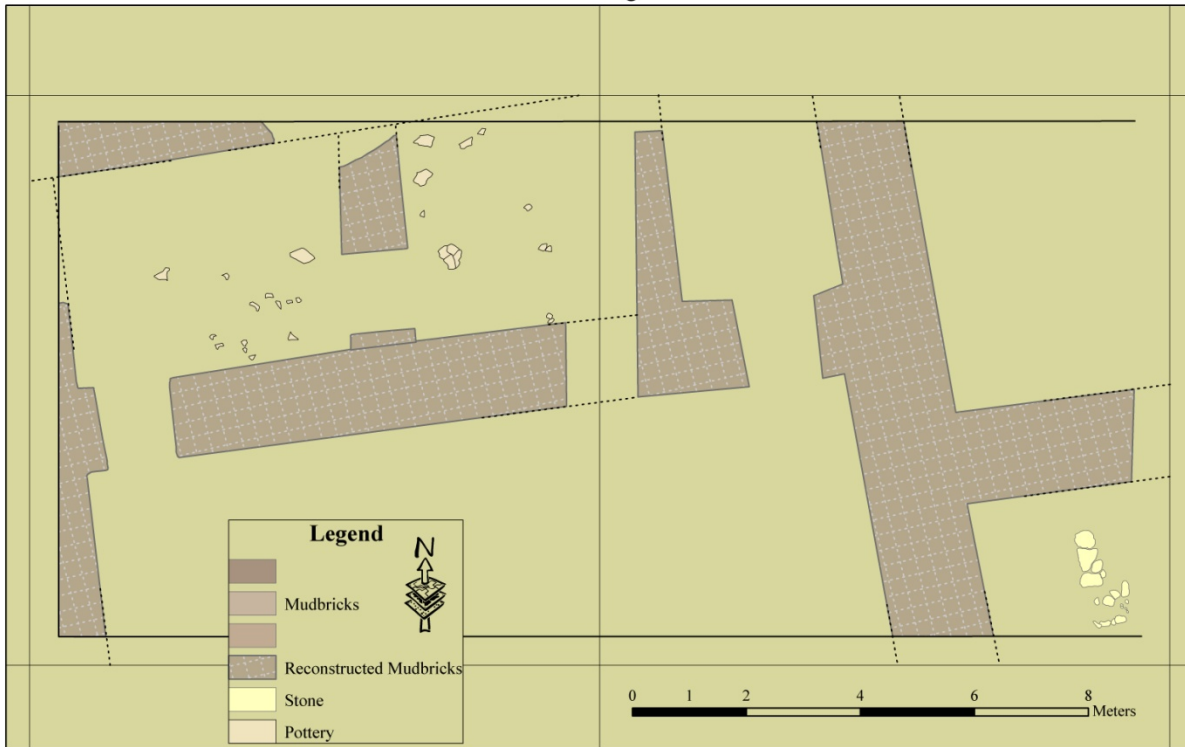


Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18