NEO-HITTITES IN THE "LAND OF PALISTIN"

Renewed Investigations at Tell Taʿyinat on the Plain of Antioch

Timothy P. Harrison

The collapse of the centralized state bureaucracies of Bronze Age civilization in the late-second millennium B.C.E. and the subsequent emergence of the small nation-states of biblical fame during the ensuing Iron Age have long fascinated scholars and the public alike. The intervening Early Iron Age (ca. 1200–900 B.C.E.), contrastingly, has remained largely obscure, generally seen as a disruptive historical inter-

lude, or "Dark Age," marked by political fragmentation, ethnic strife, and cultural devolution. However, recent archaeological excavations and a growing corpus of epigraphic discoveries have begun to lift the obscuring veil on this elusive period, revealing a formative, historically significant era. The emerging picture is of a considerably more complex cultural and political landscape, shaped by powerful forces of both change and continuity.

Tell Taʿyinat is situated near the northern bend of the Orontes River at the point where it turns west and runs along the southwestern edge of the Amuq Plain. The site consists of an upper and lower mound, which together encompass an area of approximately forty hectares, with the lower mound now largely buried by the river's flood plain. Its location in the Amuq Plain positioned Taʿyinat strategically at the intersection of a series of important transit corridors between the Anatolian highlands to the north, the Syro-Mesopotamian interior to the east, the Levantine littoral to the south, and the Mediterranean coast to the west. *Photo by M. Akar.*

The pace of discovery has been particularly pronounced in the Hittite realm of central Anatolia and northwest Syria, and has forced a thorough revision of longstanding views about the Hittite Empire's political fortunes during its final stages and in the aftermath of its collapse. While scholars have long assumed the Neo-Hittite states of the first millennium B.C.E. were linked culturally and linguistically to their Bronze Age Anatolian forebears, thus far only the "Great Kings" of Karkamish have produced a dynastic line that actually bridges the intervening era, while the archaeological record remains largely devoid of well-excavated cultural sequences for this period.

Recent epigraphic discoveries, however, have now raised the prospect of tracing the historical development of another Early Iron Age polity, associated with the "Land of Palistin," and centered at the site of Tell Taʿyinat in the North Orontes Valley. These discoveries include two Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions recently uncovered in the Temple of the Storm God on the Aleppo Citadel (see the article in this issue) that make reference to an individual named Taita, who describes himself as "Hero and King of the Land of Palistin."[1] Most recently, David Hawkins, who has undertaken the translation and publication of these inscriptions, has proposed that the Luwian term shares an etymology with the *Peleset* (Assyrian *Palast*) mentioned in the Medinet Habu reliefs of Sea Peoples fame, and therefore possibly also a common historical, if not ethnic, origin (see the article in this issue).

The archaeological remains of Early Iron Age Taʿyinat thus present an exciting opportunity to explore the historical experience of a community that played a prominent role during this formative era. The evidence points to the emergence of a powerful regional state, comprised of an intriguing amalgam of Aegean, Anatolian (or Luwian), and Bronze Age West Syrian cultural traditions, which appears to have eclipsed nearby Aleppo as the principal power in the region during the Early Iron Age. Taʿyinat resurfaces in the ninth century B.C.E. as the capital of the Neo-

Hittite Kingdom of Patina (or the alternative Unqi) in Neo-Assyrian sources, albeit within diminished political borders, and is eventually destroyed in 738 B.C.E. by Tiglath-pileser III, who transforms it into an Assyrian provincial capital.[2]

The Archaeology of Early Iron Age Taʿyinat

Tell Taʿyinat is situated near the northern bend of the Orontes River at the point where it turns west and runs along the southwestern edge of the Amuq Plain. The site consists of an upper and lower mound, which together encompass an area of approximately forty hectares, with the lower mound now largely buried by the river's flood plain. Its location in the Amuq Plain positioned Taʿyinat strategically at the intersection of a series of important transit corridors between the Anatolian highlands to the north, the Syro-Mesopotamian interior to the east, the Levantine littoral to the south, and the Mediterranean coast to the west. The Amuq Plain also provided a wealth of natural resources and a fertile environment for intensive agricultural production. As a result, the region preserves an exceptionally rich archaeological record—the Braidwood survey, conducted in the 1930s in conjunction with the Syro-Hittite Expedition (see below), recorded no fewer than 178 mounded settlement sites within the narrow confines of the plain—and it has been the scene of several prominent excavations, including at Tell Taʿyinat, which collectively have produced one of the foundational cultural sequences for the ancient Near East.

The Syro-Hittite Expedition Excavations

Large-scale excavations were conducted by the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute over the course of four field seasons between 1935 and 1938 as part of its Syro-Hittite Expedition. These excavations focused primarily on the West
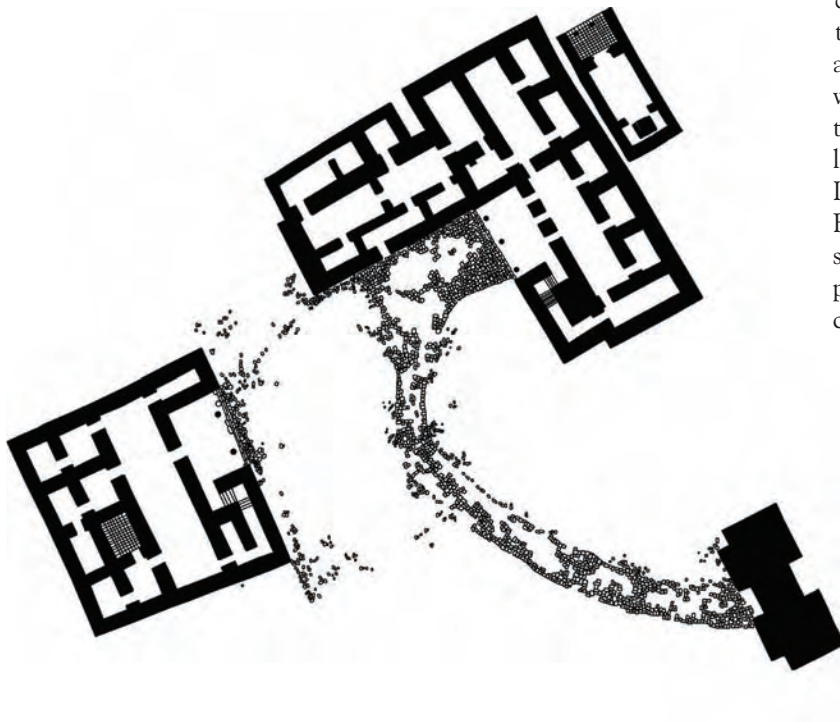

The Amuq Plain preserves an exceptionally rich archaeological record and has been the scene of several prominent excavations, including at Tell Taʿyinat, which collectively have produced one of the foundational cultural sequences for the ancient Near East. This map shows the principal settlements in the Plain. *Map by S. Batiuk.*
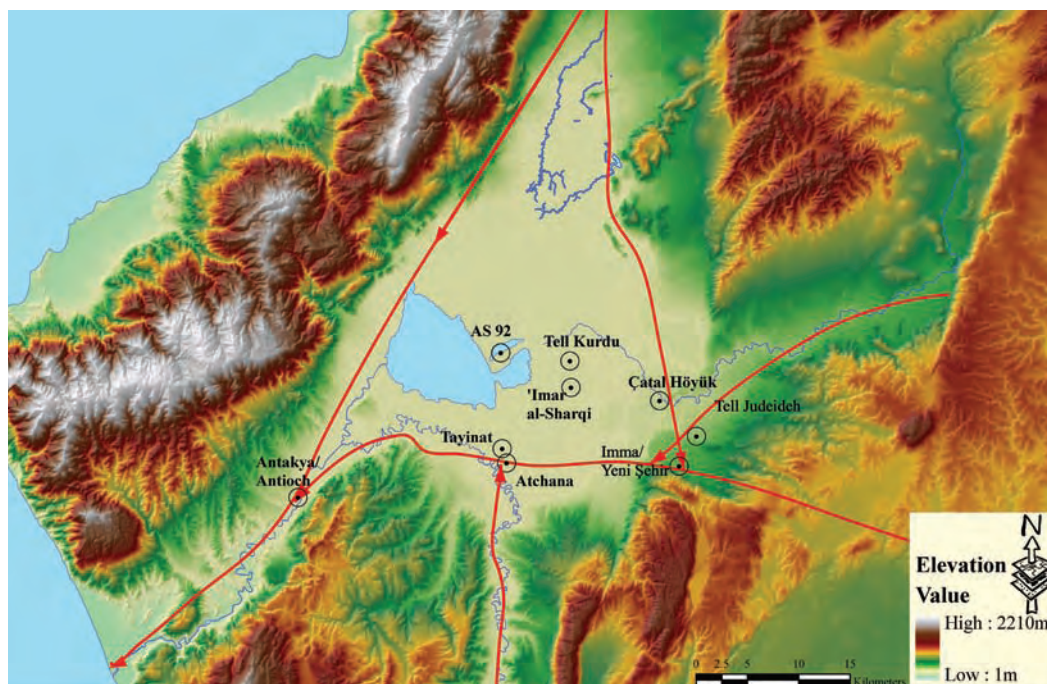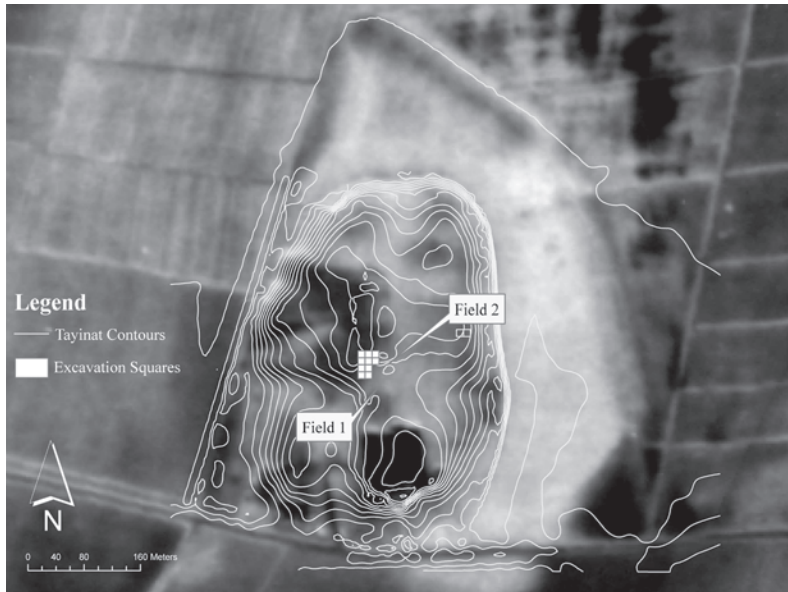
This contour map of Tell Taʿyinat is overlaid on a Corona satellite image of the site and shows the excavation areas of the Taʿyinat Archaeological Project. The University of Chicago's Oriental Institute's excavations on the West Central Area are visible as a dark shadow in the western part of the upper mound in the map. *Map created by S. Batiuk.*


Plan of the Second Building Period complex. From left to right are a *bit hilani* palace (Building IV), another, larger, *bit hilani* (Building I), a temple (Building II), and at the bottom right a gateway (Building XII), all arranged around a paved central courtyard (Courtyard VIII). This complex was the most extensive and best preserved architectural phase that the Chicago expedition uncovered in the West Central Area. *Created by S. Batiuk; adapted from Haines 1971: pl. 106.*

Central Area of the upper mound (visible as a dark shadow in the western part of the upper mound in the contour map), although excavation areas were also opened on the eastern and southern edges of the upper mound and in the lower settlement.[3] In all, the Chicago expedition achieved large horizontal exposures of five distinct architectural phases, or "Building Periods," which they assigned to the Iron II and III periods (or Amuq Phase O, ca. 900–550 B.C.E.; Haines 1971: 64–66). A series of isolated soundings below the earliest Phase O floors encountered remains that dated primarily to the third millennium B.C.E. (specifically Amuq Phases H, I, and J; Braidwood and Braidwood 1960: 13–14), suggesting a lengthy period of abandonment between the final Early Bronze Age settlement and the first Iron Age settlement.

According to the Chicago excavators, Building I, the most famous of Taʿyinat's *bit hilani* palaces, and the adjacent *megaron*-style temple (Building II) were constructed during the Second Building Period,[4] the beginning of which they dated to the end of the ninth century B.C.E., based largely on the presence of Hieroglyphic Luwian fragments that were found on or below their floors (see further discussion below; Haines 1971: 66). Renovations to these buildings accounted for most of the activity assigned to their Third and Fourth Building Periods, which they dated to the latter part of the eighth and the seven centuries B.C.E., although stratigraphic links to the artifactual sequence remain tenuous.[5] In addition to Buildings I and II, the Second Building Period also included Buildings IV (a second *bit hilani*) and VI, and altogether formed part of a large complex arranged around a paved central courtyard (Courtyard VIII). The Second

bit hilani • *Palaces built in the* bit hilani *style were especially popular during the tenth through eighth centuries* B.C.E *in northwestern Syria. They are characterized by a monumental portico with columns flanked by large massive parts of the building and approached by a broad but relatively low flight of steps. Beyond the portico lay the great hall, rectangular in shape and surrounded on all sides by smaller rooms. The throne was situated at the far end of the hall. Stairs from the sides of the portico led to a second story.*

megaron • *Structures built in this style typically consist of a rectangular hall fronted by an open, often pillared, porch or anteroom.*

Building Period complex was the most extensive and best preserved architectural phase uncovered in the West Central Area by the Chicago expedition. It also exhibited clear stratigraphic separation from earlier, more fragmentary architectural remains encountered by the Chicago team, which they loosely assigned to their First Building Period.

The Syro-Hittite Expedition achieved limited exposures of two large structures, identified as Buildings XIII and XIV, beneath the floors and walls of several Second Building Period structures. The east part of Building XIII extended under Building IV, while Building XIV was sealed by Buildings I and VI, and the southern portion of IV. Since they represented the earliest Iron Age architectural levels encountered by the Syro-Hittite Expedition in the West Central Area, Haines assigned both buildings to the First Building Period (Haines 1971: 64). As with the Second Building Period, both structures appeared to form part of a larger complex that was also oriented around a central courtyard. Fragmentary remains uncovered below Second Building Period levels elsewhere on the upper mound were also tentatively assigned to this First Building Period.
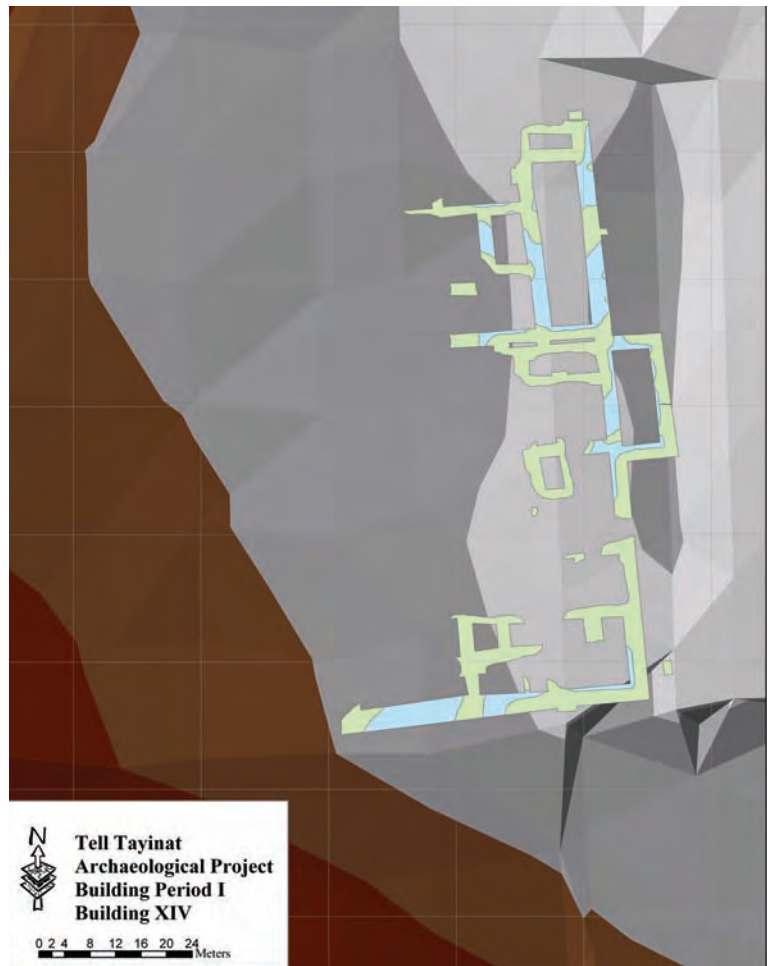
This plan of the Building XIV remains excavated by the Chicago expedition gives an indication of its enormous size. The original excavators were unable to determine the building's function. *Created by S. Batiuk; adapted from Haines 1971: pl. 95.*

Approx. Dates (B.C.E)	Cultural Phase (Mazzoni 2000)	Amuq Sequence (Swift 1958)	Tell Taʿyinat (Building Periods)
1200		Phase N	
1150	Iron Age IA		
1100			
1050	Iron Age IB		
1000			
950	Iron Age IC	Phase Oa (950–900)	
900	Iron Age IIA	Phase Ob (900–800)	BP I (d. 831?) Bldgs XIII & XIV
850			
800	Iron Age IIB	Phase Oc (800–725)	BP II (d.738) Bldgs I:3, II, IV:2, VI Gates III, VII, XI, XII
750			
725/700	Iron Age III	Phase Od (725–550)	BP III Bldgs I:2, II, IV:1, IX BP IV Bldgs I:1, IV?, G VII BP V Bldgs I:G1a, X
650			
600			

Building XIII was excavated during the 1937 season. Unfortunately, except for a few wall fragments along its east side, only the sub-floor structural foundations of the building were found intact. Nevertheless, the general outline of Building XIII was reasonably clear, betraying the unmistakable characteristics of a *bit hilani* (for the floor plan, see Haines 1971: pl. 94). The building was roughly rectangular in shape, measuring approximately 28 by 35 meters, and was entered from the south through what appears to have been a porticoed entrance with a series of side rooms arranged around a long, rectangular central room, presumably the main reception hall (Haines 1971: 38–39). The building's foundations were formed by deeply cut, vertically faced trenches filled with unbaked brick, a distinctive construction technique also used in many of the other monumental buildings of the West Central Area (Braidwood and Braidwood 1960: 13).

Though poorly preserved and only partially excavated, Building XIV appears to have been considerably larger than Building XIII. As with Building XIII, very little of its superstructure was found intact, and the excavators therefore were unable to reconstruct a composite plan of the complex or establish its function (Haines 1971: 39–40). However, they did succeed in piecing together a fragmentary plan of the architecture they encountered that gives some indication of its enormous size (see Haines 1971: pl. 95), which the excavators estimate to have been at least 49 by 95 meters.

Miscellaneous Architectural Remains

A number of isolated architectural finds appear also to belong to the First Building Period, and add further to the scale and grandeur of this early phase at Tell Taʿyinat. In particular, at least two similarly carved basalt column bases, ranging in diameter between 1.3 to 1.4 meters, were recovered from contexts that suggest they originally belonged to either Buildings XIII or XIV. One was found on the surface of the mound (see Haines [1971: 37, pls. 68D and 116B]), while the second was found (apparently in reuse) in the paving of Courtyard VIII, directly above the porch entrance to Building XIII (Haines 1971: 39; depicted in the northeast corner of Square F-17 in pl. 99). Two additional column bases were uncovered in a sounding (T 9) excavated beneath the pavement of Courtyard VIII in the area of Squares H–J 17–18 (see Haines 1971: 41, pls. 89A and 98B). Although

This carved basalt orthostat depicting two charioteers driving over a defeated enemy was said to have been found at Tell Taʿyinat when first reported in 1896, but its association with the site is uncertain. If the association is legitimate, it probably dates to the First Building Period. *From Braidwood 1937: fig. 7. Courtesy of The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.*

of uncertain provenance, these column bases clearly predate the Second (and Third) Building Period structures they were recovered from, while their simple architectural style anticipates the smaller, more elaborately carved column bases found *in situ* at the entrance to Building I (cf. Haines 1971: pls. 78C–D, 103, and 116A).

The Chicago excavations also recovered two carved lion-headed orthostats in secondary contexts. The first (T-3269) was found reused in the north wall of Building IV (Haines 1971: 42, pls. 71B and 97) in a context associated with the building's second phase of occupation (specifically Floor 1, or the Third Building Period, according to the Haines phasing sequence 1971: 65). The second lion-headed orthostat (T-3270) was also found out of context on Floor 3 in Room A,

the stairwell for Building I, a context dated by the excavators to the Second Building Period (see Haines 1971: 65). Both orthostats display characteristics typical of early Neo-Hittite sculpture, and almost certainly should be assigned to the First Building Period.[6]

A final architectural piece should also be considered, although its association with Taʿyinat is not certain. The piece in question, a carved basalt orthostat depicting two charioteers driving over a defeated enemy rendered larger than life size, was first reported in 1896, and was said at the time to have been found at Tell Taʿyinat (Braidwood 1937: 33, fig. 7). Although dated on stylistic grounds by some scholars to the eighth century B.C.E., the chariot scene resembles similar reliefs found at Karkamish and Zincirli that are typically dated to the tenth or ninth centuries B.C.E. and contains design elements commonly associated with the ninth century or earlier. Perhaps more significantly, the Second through Fifth Building Periods at Taʿyinat, in other words the late-ninth century B.C.E. and later, thus far have produced only plain basalt orthostats.

Luwian Hieroglyphic Monuments

The Syro-Hittite Expedition also recovered a substantial number of fragmentary Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions. The Expedition's field records indicate that these epigraphic remains (a total of almost ninety fragments are reported) were recovered from a wide range of secondary and tertiary contexts in the West Central Area broadly associated with the First and Second Building Periods (Haines 1971: 41, 66). When plotted spatially, the fragments cluster tightly around Building XIV. Several fragments appear to have belonged to a single monumental inscription, designated Tell Taʿyinat Inscription 1 (see the photo on p. 167), which makes reference to an individual named *Halparuntiyas*, apparently a ruler of the "Land of Walistin" (initially read "Wadasatini"; see Gelb 1939: 39; Hawkins 2000: 365–67). It is possible he may be the same Patinean ruler said to have paid tribute to Shalmaneser III in 857 and 853 B.C.E. (see further in Harrison 2001: 117–19). More intriguingly, Hawkins has now proposed that the toponym should be equated with the "Palistin" of the Aleppo citadel inscriptions (see the article in this issue). The Wadasatin/Walistin toponym also occurs on two Luwian inscriptions found in the vicinity of Hama (see Hawkins 2000: 415–19).[7] Thus, the extraordinary size of Building XIV, the monumental column bases and carved orthostats possibly associated with it, and the rich epigraphic record concentrated in its vicinity unquestionably mark this building as an important Early Iron Age structure.

The Taʿyinat Archaeological Project Investigations

The Taʿyinat Archaeological Project (TAP) was conceived within the framework of the Amuq Valley Regional Project (AVRP), which has systematically been documenting the archaeology of the Amuq Plain in southeastern Turkey since 1995. Within this broader regional research framework, TAP was initiated as a long-term

Legend

Hawkins No.
- ▲ TT1
- ■ TT2
- ● TT3
- ⬠ Prob. TT2
- ★ Large Script
- ▲ Frag. Bld VI
- ● Misc. Frag.
- ◆ Non Illustrated/ Some Discard

N

The almost ninety inscribed fragments that were reported in various contexts in the West Central Area by the Chicago Expedition cluster tightly around Building XIV. Its extraordinary size, the monumental column bases and carved orthostats possibly associated with it, and the rich epigraphic record concentrated in its vicinity mark this building as an important Early Iron Age structure. The fragments are grouped according to their assigned inscription or monument number. Thus, TT1 represents all those fragments that have been assigned to Tell Taʿyinat Inscription 1, and so forth. *Plan created by S. Batiuk.*
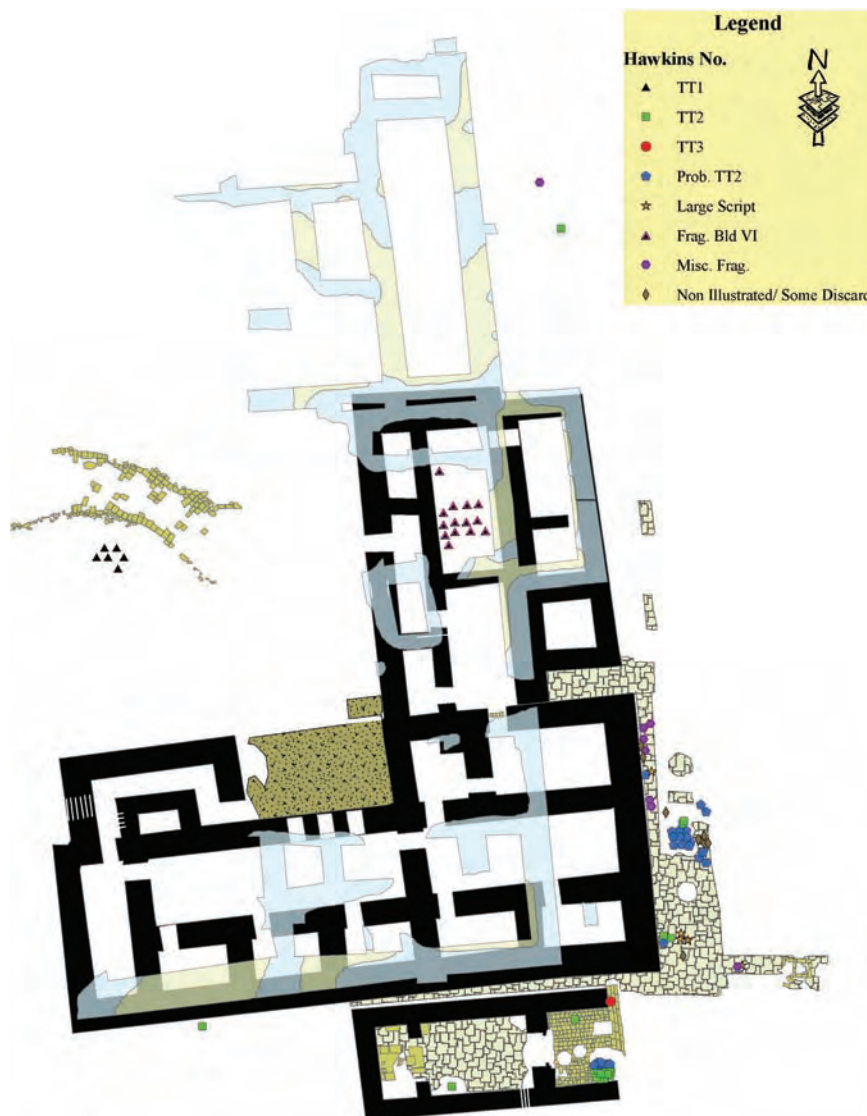
field project, designed fully and systematically to document the archaeological record preserved at the site, clearly identified by the Syro-Hittite Expedition as one of the principal Bronze and Iron Age settlements on the plain. Following preliminary field seasons devoted to surveying and mapping the site (see further in Batiuk, Harrison, and Pavlish 2005), targeted excavations were resumed at Tell Taʿyinat in 2004 and have continued on an annual basis since.

The Field 1 Excavations

With the commencement of excavations in 2004, an exploratory probe was initiated along the southern edge of the West Central Area to test, or "ground truth," remote sensing data gathered during the surface survey. These initial excavations, limited to a 3 by 20-meter trench spanning two 10 by 10-meter squares, uncovered the northern wall and portions of the central room of Building II, the megaron-style temple first excavated by the Syro-Hittite Expedition. Building II, in turn, sealed a remarkably well-preserved sequence of Early Iron Age remains, including a wealth of pottery and other material culture exhibiting strong Aegean associations. During the following 2005 season, the 2004 probe was extended laterally to the south and identified as Field 1, expanding the excavated area to four 10-by-10-meter squares, or a total area of 400 square meters. To date, the excavations in Field 1 have succeeded in delineating eight superimposed architectural phases, or Field Phases (FP), with the primary sequence (FPs 3–6) dating to the twelfth through eleventh centuries B.C.E., or the Early Iron I (or Iron IA) period.
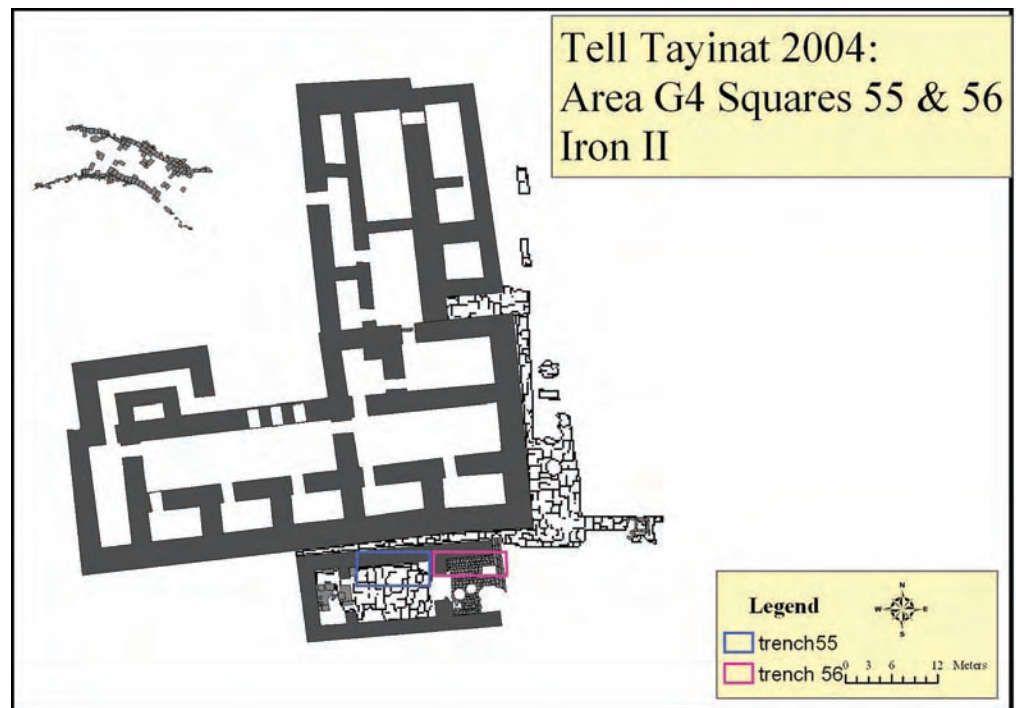
The earliest Iron Age settlement, represented by FP 6, cut directly into remains dating to the late-third millennium B.C.E. (or the Syro-Hittite Expedition's Amuq Phase J). Though heavily disturbed by subsequent building activity, FP 6 nevertheless preserved a number of large storage "silos," with several smaller pits interspersed between them, some of which contained large concentrations of non-perforated, cylindrical clay loom weights and other artifacts associated with textile production. Field Phases 5 and 4 produced a series of rectilinear structures, some with walls constructed in a header and stretcher technique. Field Phase 4 remains were heavily damaged

In 2004, excavations in Building II, the megaron-style temple first excavated by the Syro-Hittite Expedition, uncovered its northern wall and portions of its central room. *Plan created by S. Batiuk.*

by leveling that occurred during construction of the substantial foundations and sub-structures of Building II (designated FP 2), and by extensive pitting activity assigned to an intermediate occupational phase (FP 3).
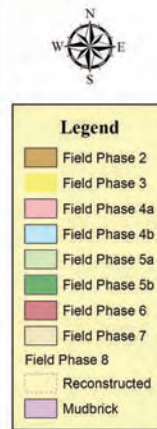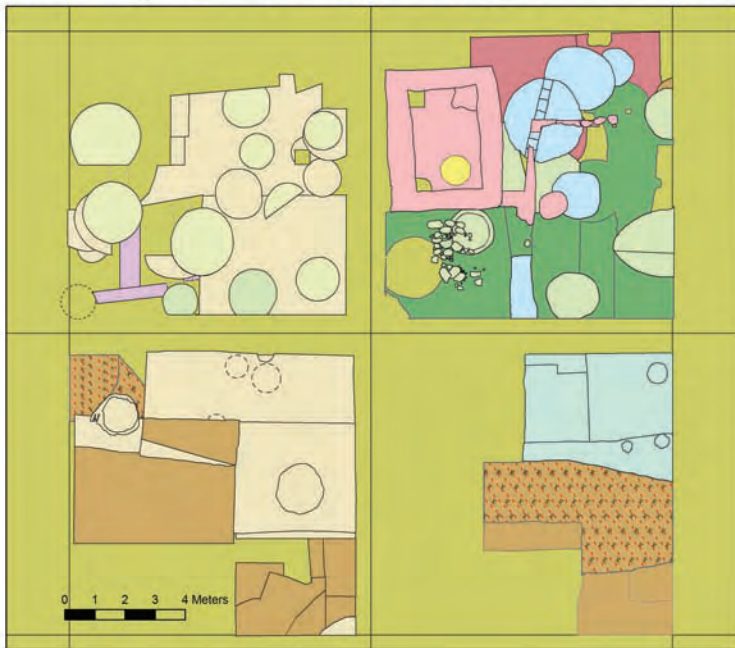
The four-phase Early Iron Age sequence delineated in Field 1 appears to correlate well with the Iron I sequences uncovered at other sites in the region. In the Amuq Plain, for example, the Syro-Hittite Expedition's excavations at Chatal Höyük identified four architectural phases dating to the Iron I (collectively, their Phase IV, or Amuq Phase N), best preserved in Area I (Levels 10–7), but also encountered in Area II (Levels 11–9), and in very limited exposures in Areas III through VI (Haines 1971: 5, 13–14, 17–24). The excavations at Tell Judaidah identified three discrete phases, Levels 11–9 (collectively Phase V; Haines 1971: 27–28). Elsewhere in the region, the Tell Afis excavations have also produced four Early Iron I levels, their Phases Va–IVa (Venturi 2007: 124–25, 137–48, and chart on 301; see also Mazzoni 2000: 31–35; 56, Table 1). In contrast to the Taʿyinat sequence, however, the Early Iron I levels at Afis form part of a longer sequence that spans the LB II/Early Iron Age transition. Stratified sequences spanning the LB II/Early Iron I have also been excavated at Ras el-Bassit and Ras Ibn Hani, and at Tell Kazel, with the Early Iron I levels at the latter two sites producing significant quantities of Mycenaean IIIC:1 pottery.[8]

Similarly, in the southern Levant, a series of sites clustered primarily along the southern coastal plain have revealed Early Iron Age levels with substantial amounts of Mycenaean IIIC:1 pottery and other material culture exhibiting strong Aegean cultural associations, including Tel Miqne/Ekron (Strata VII–VI), Areas G and H at Ashdod (Strata XIII–XI), and Grid 38 at Ashkelon (Phase 20 [=Stratum XVII].[9]

Tell Tayinat 2004:
Area G4 Squares 55 & 56
Iron II

Legend
trench55
trench56
0 3 6 12 Meters

Tell Taʻyinat 2007: Area G4 Squares 55, 56, 65 & 66

Legend
- Field Phase 2
- Field Phase 3
- Field Phase 4a
- Field Phase 4b
- Field Phase 5a
- Field Phase 5b
- Field Phase 6
- Field Phase 7
- Field Phase 8
- Reconstructed
- Mudbrick

0 1 2 3 4 Meters

◄ Composite plan of the architecture in Field 1. The Early Iron Age remains are represented by a series of circular storage silos and rectilinear structures (Field Phases 3–6). Field Phase 2 corresponds to the Iron II, and Field Phases 7 and 8 the Early Bronze Age (Amuq Phase J, or EB IVB). *Plan created by S. Batiuk.*

▼ This Early Iron Age pit in Field 1 contained a cache of non-perforated cylindrical clay loom weights and other artifacts associated with textile production. *Photo by D. Lumb.*

Pottery

The Early Iron I levels in Field 1 have produced large quantities of Mycenaean IIIC:1 pottery, which formed the dominant potting tradition over the course of the FPs 6 through 3 sequence. A wide spectrum of forms, motifs, and fabrics are represented in the assemblage. However, I will only summarize the salient features of the assemblage here, since a more thorough description of the pottery analyzed to date has been presented elsewhere (see Janeway 2006–2007: 129–38). Shallow rounded bowls and deeper bell-shaped bowls, or skyphoi, are the most common vessel types in the assemblage. The skyphoi are equipped typically with close-set horizontal handles, usually with a painted band applied along the handle, a ring base, and are decorated with horizontal, linear painted bands on the exterior or, alternatively, with a combination of linear and non-linear motifs, and a solidly coated interior. Two color combinations predominate: red painted decorations on a pinkish fabric (RoP), and black painted decorations on a buff, white fabric (BoW). Bell-shaped bowls were also well-represented at Chatal Höyük and Tell Judaidah, with thirty-five examples recorded by the Syro-Hittite Expedition, and grouped according to three decorative schemes (Swift 1958: 66, figs. 19–21). Other painted wares commonly found in the Field 1 assemblage include kraters, amphorae, their handles typically decorated with swirling tassels, and spouted jars, referred to as feeding bottles in the southern Levantine tradition (Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 24).

The Field 1 assemblage also includes a distinctive cooking ware that closely resembles the so-called "Philistine Cooking Jug" found in contemporary levels in the southern Levant (see Killebrew 1999; 2005: 222–23). It is distinguishable morphologically and technologically from a Bronze Age tradition that continues into the Iron Age. The typical vessel has an ovoid body with sloping shoulders that lead to an everted rim, usually with a thickened or rounded lip, and it is equipped with either one or two handles and a disk base. The vessels are made of a dark, gray-brown fabric and tempered with crushed shell (Janeway 2006–2007: 134–36). This distinctive cooking ware tradition is commonly found in the Aegean and on Cyprus, and appears as early as the Late Helladic III (ca. 1400 B.C.E.; Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 28–30; Killebrew 2005: 222–23).

The Mycenaean IIIC:1 tradition appears to have enjoyed widespread distribution in the North Orontes Valley. In addition to its predominance at Tell Taʻyinat, the AVRP Survey has reported Mycenaean IIIC:1 pottery at eighteen other sites in the valley (Verstraete and Wilkinson 2000: 188–89). Moreover, according to Swift, painted wares accounted for an astounding 90 to 95 percent of the total Phase N assemblage recovered by the Syro-Hittite Expedition (Swift 1958: 64). Clearly the product of local manufacture, the unique formal and stylistic features of the Mycenaean IIIC:1 pottery preserved in the Early Iron Age levels at Tell Taʻyinat
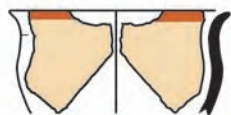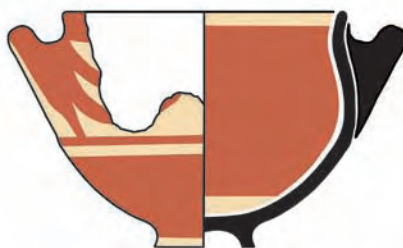
Tell Ta'yinat bowls (Phases 6-3)
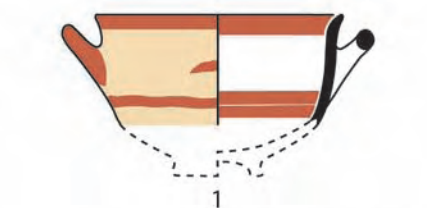
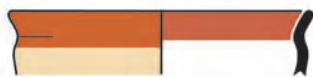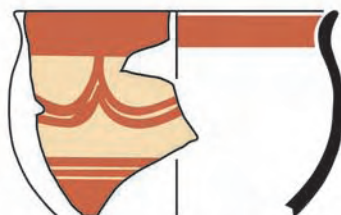The Early Iron I levels in Field 1 have produced large quantities of Mycenaean IIIC:1 pottery. A wide spectrum of forms, motifs, and fabrics are represented in the assemblage. Deep bell-shaped bowls, or skyphoi, shown here, are among the most common vessel types in the assemblage. *Drawing by B. Janeway.*

and in the North Orontes Valley more generally, reflect the local, idiosyncratic character of this distinctive potting tradition, reinforcing the regionalized and heterogeneous nature of its development throughout the eastern Mediterranean. As a result, despite numerous attempts to identify criteria that can chart its chronological development (summarized conveniently in Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 2–3), not surprisingly, no clear consensus has yet to emerge. Nevertheless, over the course of the Iron I, the developmental trajectory experienced in the North Orontes Valley clearly witnessed the gradual eclipse of Mycenaean IIIC:1 pottery and its eventual replacement in the Late Iron I/Early Iron II by the Red Slipped Burnished Ware tradition, a trend that also has been observed elsewhere in the region (see Venturi 2007: 297–300 and Janeway 2006–2007: 136–37).

Loom Weights

To date, the TAP excavations in Field 1 have produced more than one hundred non-perforated, cylindrical clay loom weights. Variously described as spools or spool weights (Stager 1998: 346; Rahmstorf 2003: 397–400), these distinctive by-products of textile production are commonly found in Late Helladic IIIC levels at sites throughout the Aegean, most notably at Mycenae and Tiryns (Rahmstorf 2003: 397, 400–402; 2008: 59–73). More recently, they have been recognized in Early Iron Age levels at an increasing number of Levantine sites, generally in association with Mycenaean IIIC:1 pottery (Stager 1998: 346; Cecchini 2000: 214–17; Rahmstorf 2003: 403–6). The Taʿyinat loom weights occur in a variety of sizes and shapes, though two particular types predominate: a cylindrical form with convex, rounded ends and an hourglass shape with a tapered mid-section and flattened, distal ends (Janeway 2006–2007: 138–39). The Field 1 loom weights typically have been found in caches, sometimes of twenty or more, deposited in pits (see the photo on p. 181), although isolated examples have also occurred. The Syro-Hittite Expedition also uncovered a cache of these distinctive loom weights at Chatal Höyük, though apparently in an early Phase O context (Room T81, Level 5b; Haines 1971: pl. 16B). It is now generally accepted that the warp-weighted loom was re-introduced to the eastern Mediterranean during the Early Iron Age (Cecchini 2000: 211–16), providing further support for a western origin of this textile productive technology. Cylindrical loom weights become less frequent towards the end of the Iron I

To date, the TAP excavations in Field 1 have produced more than one hundred non-perforated, cylindrical clay loom weights. These distinctive by-products of textile production occur in a variety of sizes and shapes at Taʿyinat, though two particular types predominate, a cylindrical form with convex, rounded ends (1) and an hourglass shape with a tapered mid-section and flattened, distal ends (2). *Drawing by F. Haughey.*

and are eventually replaced entirely by a perforated, spherical type (Cecchini 2000: 217–22), mirroring the similar decline in the presence of Mycenaean IIIC:1 pottery.

The Field 1 excavations have also produced other cultural remains of possible Aegean derivation, including clay figurines, potter's marks, and a faunal record that may reflect western dietary habits (Lipovitch 2006–2007). Although analysis of the Iron I levels in Field 1 is still ongoing, it nevertheless has become increasingly clear that the inhabitants of the Early Iron Age settlement at Tell Taʿyinat enjoyed a wide spectrum of shared cultural, technological, and possibly even linguistic knowledge and experience with the Aegean world.
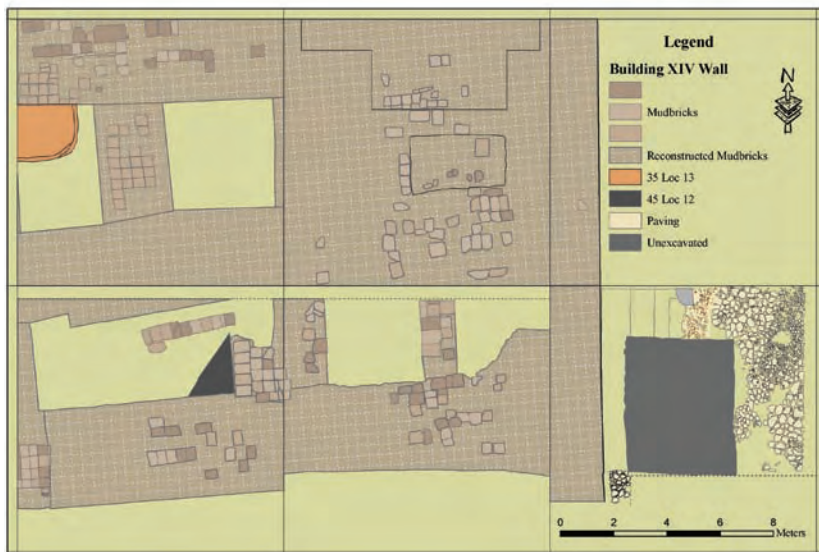
The Field 2 Excavations

In 2005, excavations were initiated to the north of Field 1 in the vicinity of Building I, the principal *bit hilani* uncovered by the Syro-Hittite Expedition. The primary objectives of the excavations in this area, designated Field 2, were to determine whether anything remained of Building I and then to excavate the earlier levels associated with Building XIV, thereby better establishing the stratigraphic relationships between these two structures.

The 2005 excavations, limited to a 10 by 10-meter square, proceeded to uncover a series of large mudbrick walls immediately below the modern plow zone. Our excavations have since exposed more than 600 square meters of a large monumental structure. The walls of the building average more than three meters in width and form a tight grid pattern of small rooms, none of which were equipped with entryways. Probes against the faces of several walls have reached a depth of more than three meters before finding bottom. Unfortunately, no internal surfaces or floors corresponding to the use-phase of the complex have been identified thus far. Clearly the foundations of an enormous structure, our excavations suggest that the Field 2 walls very probably formed part of the southeastern corner of the Syro-Hittite Expedition's Building XIV (see the plan on p. 177).

In 2007, excavations were initiated to the east of the building in an effort to find surfaces that might have sealed against its eastern exterior. These excavations revealed a stone pavement, which in turn sealed a densely packed sherd-strewn surface, comprised predominantly of Red Slipped Burnished Ware pottery (depicted in the lower right corner in plan on p. 184). Unfortunately, the Syro-Hittite Expedition had
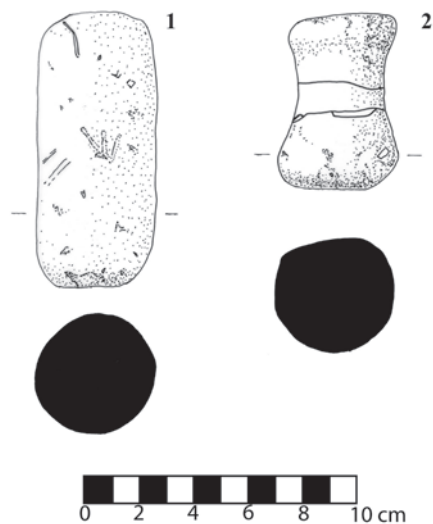
trenched along the exterior face of the wall, obliterating any stratigraphic connections that might have existed between these surfaces and the wall. Consequently, in 2008, we opened two new squares further to the east in the hopes that similar disturbance would be minimal in this area, and the stratigraphic sequence therefore relatively more intact. Quite unexpectedly, subsequent excavations (in 2008 and 2009) have revealed the well-preserved remains of an Iron Age temple.

The building was approached from the south by means of a monumental stone-paved staircase. A small basalt column rested on the western edge of the staircase, just in front of the southern end of the building's west wall. The staircase led to a porch supporting an ornately carved basalt column base set deeply into its floor. The column base is virtually identical in size, shape, and design to the column bases found in the entrance to the nearby Building I. However, its lowest carved register was largely hidden from view, obscured by the paved surface of the porch, suggesting that an earlier surface, or phase, to the building still lies unexcavated below. The porch was separated from the central room of the building by two brick piers. A thick deposit of burnt brick, apparently collapse, covered much of the floor between the two piers. This material, in turn, sealed three heavily charred

Tell Tayinat 2007: Field II
Late IronI/Early Iron II (Building XIV)

▲ Recent excavations have exposed more than 600 square meters of a large monumental structure in Field 2, probably part of the southeastern corner of the Syro-Hittite Expedition's Building XIV. *Plan created by S. Batiuk.*

▼ Excavations in 2008 and 2009 revealed the well-preserved remains of an Iron Age Temple. The building was approached from the south by means of a monumental stone-paved staircase, viewed here from the south. A small basalt column rested on the western edge of the staircase, just in front of the southern end of the building's west wall. *Photo by J. Osborne.*

Aerial view and plan of the Field 2 temple. The floor of the central room, though badly burned, appeared to have been plastered. The room contained a substantial quantity of bronze metal and several fragments of carved ivory inlay, suggesting it had been furnished. A thick layer of collapsed burnt brick sealed the entire room, vivid evidence of the intensity of the conflagration that had consumed the structure. *Photo and plan by S. Batiuk.*

wooden beams, at least one of which appeared to have been set directly into the floor, and therefore possibly part of a threshold for the doorway.

The floor of the central room, though badly burned, appeared to have been plastered. The room was largely devoid of pottery or organic remains, but it did produce a substantial quantity of bronze metal, including riveted pieces and several fragments of carved ivory inlay. Though heavily burned and damaged, these remains suggest the central room had been equipped with furniture or wall fixings. The room also produced fragments of gold and silver foil, and the carved eye inlay from a human figure. A thick layer of collapsed burnt brick sealed the entire room, and in some places had fused with the brickwork of the building's outer walls, vivid evidence of the intensity of the conflagration that had consumed the structure.

A second set of piers separated the central room from a small back room, the inner sanctuary, or "holy of holies," of the temple. This northern-most room contained an elevated, rectangular platform, or podium, that filled almost the entire room and clearly represented a renovation to the original design and intended function of the space. The surface of the podium was paved with clay tiles, and accessed by steps in its two southern corners. The room had also been burned in the intense fire and contained a wealth of cultic paraphernalia found strewn across the podium and around its base, including gold, bronze, and iron implements, libation vessels, and ornately decorated ritual objects. The surface

debris also contained a cache of cuneiform tablets, written in Late Assyrian script, very probably part of a Neo-Assyrian provincial archive.

The construction methods used to build the exterior walls of the temple are identical to those typically found in the other public buildings of the West Central Area, including the distinctive "wood-crib" construction technique (for more detailed description, see Haines 1971: 45–46). In addition, the exterior face of the temple's west wall was decorated with a bright white painted plaster and the building was surrounded on its west and south sides by a flagstone pavement, the same pavement cut by the Chicago excavations, clearly part of an expansive open courtyard or plaza. Significantly, several Hieroglyphic Luwian fragments were found scattered on this stone pavement. Moreover, we have been able 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. The probe also uncovered what appears to have been a foundation, or platform, roughly square in shape and built of finely dressed basalt orthostats, perhaps support for a free-standing monument (see Haines 1971: 45, pls. 74B, 103). The Syro-Hittite Expedition also reported finding numerous Hieroglyphic Luwian fragments in the vicinity, including parts of a block-shaped inscription, Tell Taʿyinat Inscription 2 (see p. 168 and for a detailed description and commentary see Hawkins 2000: 367–68). It is tempting to propose these all came from a single monument that once stood on the platform. Unfortunately, nothing of the original structure remains intact, having been removed, or destroyed, following the Chicago excavations.

Thus far, our excavations of the temple in Field 2 have only uncovered its terminal phase, which almost certainly dates to the late-eighth or (more probably) early-seventh centuries B.C.E., during the settlement's Neo-Assyrian provincial phase. Its earlier construction history and dating therefore remain unclear. Nevertheless, the distinctive architectural style and design of the building's original structures suggest that it was constructed together with the adjacent Buildings I and II and thus should be assigned to the Second Building Period, or sometime during the late-ninth or eighth centuries B.C.E. Functionally, the newly found temple emerges as part of a larger religious complex, essentially a sacred precinct, adjoined to the royal palace of the Neo-Hittite kings of Patina/Unqi or, perhaps more accurately, of Palistin/Walistin.

Despite the stratigraphic break and lack of internal surfaces in the monumental building to the west of the temple in Field 2, the associated pottery suggests a Late Iron I/Early Iron II date (ca. tenth to early-ninth centuries B.C.E.) for this complex. Since its southern wall was sealed over by soil loci that in turn sealed against the north wall of Building II in Field 1 to the south, it also seems clear that the structure is stratigraphically earlier

A view of the Syro-Hittite Expedition's eastern probe, conducted in 1938, including an orthostat-lined square installation or platform that may have supported a free-standing monument. Fragments of a Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription were found in its vicinity. Was the inscription a part of the monument that once stood on the platform? *From Haines 1971: pl. 74B. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.*

in date than the buildings of the Second Building Period, and thus very probably belongs to the Building XIV complex of the preceding First Building Period. Nevertheless, these stratigraphic correlations are contingent upon further excavations and therefore must remain tentative for the time being.

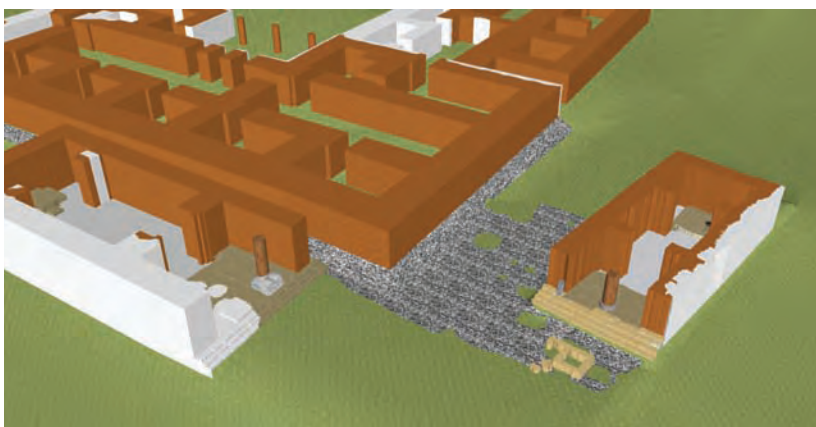## Early Iron Age Taʿyinat and the "Land of Palistin"

Although the collapse of the Hittite Empire at the end of the Late Bronze Age clearly created a political vacuum that fostered an era of prolonged regional instability, there is also growing evidence of cultural and political continuity. In key centers of Hittite power, such as at Karkamish, Hittite imperial control appears to have survived in the form of diminished "rump" states ruled by dynastic lines with direct ancestral links to the royal family in Hattusa. Interspersed

This composite plan of the "sacred precinct" in the West Central Area illustrates how the newly found temple was part of a larger religious complex, essentially a sacred precinct, adjoined to the royal palace of the Neo-Hittite kings of Patina/Unqi. *Plan created by S. Batiuk.*

between these reduced enclaves of Hittite influence, rival political centers, perhaps most importantly at Zincirli (ancient Samʾal) and Tell Rifaʿat (ancient Arpad), also began to materialize, reflecting their own newly emergent cultural and linguistic traditions. The result was a highly fragmented, or "balkanized," political landscape within which a diverse cultural and ethnic milieu was able to develop and flourish. This cultural and political ferment provided the stimulus that forged the small vibrant nation-states that would come to define Iron Age civilization in this region.

In the North Orontes Valley, the existing archaeological evidence supports this view of continuity and change. Survey data indicate significant levels of settlement continuity during the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age.[10] At the same time, there is also evidence of change, attested perhaps most revealingly in the shift of the primary settlement in the valley from Tell Atchana (ancient Alalakh) to nearby Tell Taʿyinat. Whether the terminal Late Bronze Age settlement at Alalakh was destroyed or abandoned remains unclear, but the renewed excavations at Taʿyinat have now demonstrated conclusively that the site was resettled in the Early Iron I (or early-twelfth century B.C.E.), after an eight-century hiatus corresponding to the period of Alalakh's ascendancy. Somewhat unexpectedly, however, the Early Iron I levels at Taʿyinat have also revealed a material cultural signature that betrays an intrusive Aegean influence, if not direct evidence for the presence of foreign settlers. Superimposed over these distinctive remains, in turn, are the monumental structures of the First Building Period, with their Hittite stylistic features and rich Luwian epigraphic record, followed by the late-ninth to eighth century *bit hilani* complex of the Second Building Period.

While the specific historical circumstances remain elusive, the accumulating archaeological and textual evidence point to the existence of a powerful regional kingdom, associated with the "Land of Palistin," which emerged in the aftermath of the Hittite Empire's collapse, ruled by a line of kings with Hittite names and very possibly with direct ancestral links to the royal dynasty. Intriguingly, this Early Iron Age polity also exhibits strong Aegean cultural ties, both in its material culture and now also epigraphically. Moreover, it appears to have eclipsed Aleppo as the dominant regional power, shifting the locus of power west to the North Orontes Valley. Centered at Tell Taʿyinat, the cultural character and wealth of this Early Iron Age kingdom are reflected in the impressive buildings and standing monuments that once crowned the upper mound and formed its ancient citadel.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. For a more detailed treatment of the broader historical context of these inscriptions, see Hawkins 2002; Harrison 2009.

2. For further treatment of this later political history, see Harrison 2001, 2005.

3. For a more thorough description of the topography and archaeological history of the site, see Batiuk, Harrison, and Pavlish 2005.

4. For detailed descriptions of these structures, see Haines 1971: 44–55.

5. For more on this phase of Taʿyinat's settlement history, see Harrison 2005.

6. Mazzoni has also dated the second lion figure (T-3270) to the Early Iron Age and has used it as evidence to argue for an eleventh to tenth century B.C.E. date for the foundation of the Iron Age city (1994: 322, n. 20; 1995: 188, n. 45).

7. The shared etymology of *Wadasatini* (as originally read) and *Patina* (*p>b>w*, with a dropping of the intervocalic *ds/ts*) was first noted by Yamada (2000: 96, n. 71) and further strengthens the historical link between the two entities.

8. Ras el-Bassit and Ras Ibn Hani: du Piêd 2006–2007: 162–63; Tell Kazel: Badre et al. 2005: 32–36; Badre 2006: 92–93; see also Capet 2006–2007).

9. Tel Miqne/Ekron: Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 3–4; Gitin, Meehl, and Dothan 2006: 29–49; Ashdod: Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 4–7; Ben-Shlomo 2005: 9; Ashkelon: Stager et al. 2008: 257–61.

10. For more on these settlement trends, see Harrison 2009: 175–76 and Pruss 2002.

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