

“THE 1999 AMUQ VALLEY REGIONAL PROJECT SURVEY”

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*INTRODUCTION*

The third millennium marked the emergence and development of early state-ordered civilizations in the ancient Near East. Research has documented the introduction of urban institutions, and the development of specialized craft industries and extensive inter-regional trade networks. To examine these developments on a truly regional level, however, local cultural sequences must be well documented, and a precise chronological framework in place; criteria that are lacking for much of the Near East. The Amuq Third Millennium Project seeks to address this problem for a pivotal area, by returning to the cultural sequence first defined during the pioneering work of the University of Chicago Expedition to the Amuq Plain of south central Turkey in the 1930s.

The 1999 season of the Amuq Valley Regional Project (AVRP) survey was conducted with the aim of initiating this research effort. The primary objectives of the 1999 season were to: (1) systematically re-survey all third millennium sites within the Amuq Plain, documenting visible topographic features and site size information, and collecting ceramic samples for materials analysis; (2) opportunistically investigate and record vertical cultural sequences exposed at a selected number of sites, collecting carbon, clay and ceramic samples for further analysis; and (3) systematically grid and collect surface pottery at Tell Ta'yinat (AS 126), believed to have been the principal settlement in the Amuq during the third millennium.

The survey was conducted between August 11 and August 25, 1999. The survey team consisted of Timothy Harrison (project director), Stephen Batiuk, Kubra Ensart, Sarah Graff and Heather Snow. The Ministry was represented by Hamdi Ekiz of the Museum of Anatolian Civilization in Ankara. In all, 39 sites were visited, with samples collected from 20 of these sites. The results of this exploratory season clarified substantially the nature of settlement on the plain during the third millennium, and have laid the groundwork toward a systematic investigation of the cultural horizons associated with this era.

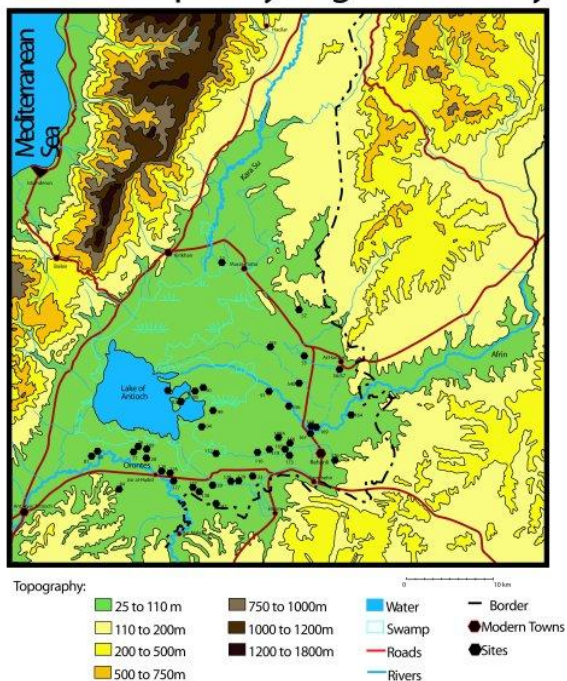
## METHODOLOGY

Each of the selected sites was surveyed following the established methods used by the AVRVP survey. All of the sites had been visited during previous field seasons. Nevertheless, survey forms were filled out for each site, including site-size information, general observations recorded of visible features on the site, and a collection made of surface pottery. In order to maximize the recovery of third millennium pottery, sherd collection was focused primarily along the lower slopes of mounds. Since all of the sites had been sherded during previous survey visits, only third millennium pottery was kept for further analysis. A number of recent bulldozer cuts were encountered during the course of the survey, and were documented using procedures developed during the 1998 field season. In addition, a digital camera was used to assist with mapping the exposed sections.

In the case of the larger settlement site of Ta'yinat (AS 126), a more intensive collection regime was adopted. Although dense cotton fields precluded a systematic sherd recovery effort, as had initially been planned, the site was nevertheless subdivided into a series of fields and sectors, and a sequence of transects (or passes) made across each spatial unit. This data will be tabulated in a relational database and analyzed for evidence of spatial patterning, using Geographic Information System (GIS) software technology. The result will be a horizontal record of the settlement extent reached during each of the cultural horizons preserved at the site, providing important site-size information for regional settlement pattern analysis, while assessing the potential for further investigations of the third millennium levels at the site.

## SURVEY RESULTS

### 1999 Amuq Valley Regional Survey



The sites visited during the 1999 survey appear in the figure to the left. There is a noticeable clustering of sites in the southern part of the plain, which becomes even more pronounced when the sites visited during the 1998 season are included. While time precluded an investigation of third millennium sites along the northern and western edges of the plain, previous survey work has produced similar patterns, and there is good reason to believe that they reflect (at least broadly) shifting settlement activity on the plain over the course of the late fourth through third millennia. The geomorphology of the plain clearly has also affected the visibility of prehistoric sites, with active alluviation probably obscuring many of the smaller sites on the plain. Earlier seasons of the AVRVP survey, for example, have documented the oscillating shoreline of the Lake of Antioch, and located third millennium

sites (AS 180 and 181) which only a few decades ago were below the water table. Nevertheless, the persistence of patterns recognized already during the Braidwood survey in the 1930s is hard to ignore, and provides a valuable framework within which to refine the settlement history of the plain during the third millennium.

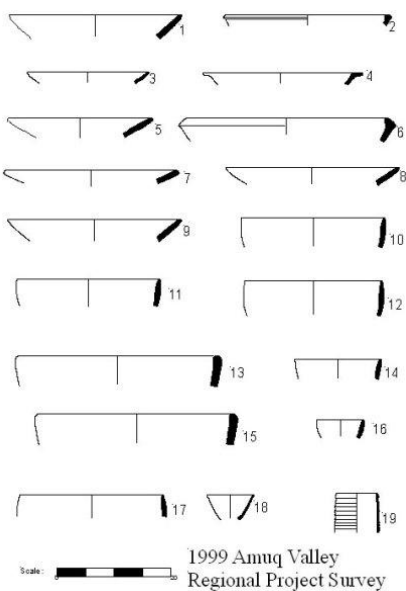
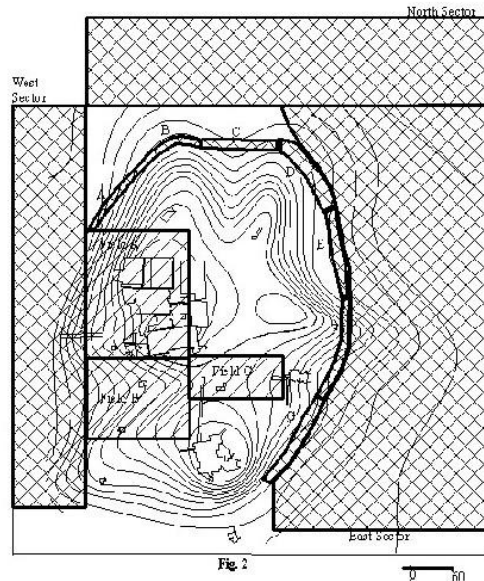
The survey data indicate a distinct shift in settlement patterns towards the end of the fourth millennium. During the fourth millennium, the largest site appears to have been Tell 'Imar al-Sharqi (AS 101), located near the center of the plain. Investigation of a section along the west slope of the site during the 1998 survey season substantiated earlier suggestions that the site was occupied extensively during Amuq Phases F and G, and possibly extended back into Phase E, providing settlement continuity with the Chalcolithic levels at nearby Tell Kurdu. Significant Phase G horizons are evident at other sites in the central part of the Amuq valley, such as Karacanlik (AS 92), Hasanusagi (AS 99), Uctepe (AS 108), Ghuzraniyyah (AS 90), Buyuk Avara (AS 116), Kokaz (AS 119), and Masstepe (AS 156) [to which can now also be added AS 180, AS 181, and AS 186, and still others], further reinforcing this central distribution.

After a (possible) hiatus in the early part of the third millennium, there was a decisive shift in settlement towards the southern fringes, with Tell Ta'yinat (AS 126), and possibly Tell Atchana (AS 136), replacing 'Imar al-Sharqi as the predominant sites on the plain. Their position along the main east-west route linking the Aleppo region with the Mediterranean coast suggests a concurrent shift in the economic and political organization of the region. The alternating nature of occupation between these two dominant urban centers seems to have been a key feature of the settlement history of the plain during the Bronze and Iron Ages, and clarification of their occupational histories will be crucial to understanding the broader cultural and socioeconomic development of the region. In addition to the introduction of Red Black Burnished Ware (RBBW), Phase H witnessed a dense distribution of predominantly small (1-2 ha) sites in place of the dispersed pattern of moderately-sized Phase G settlements that had preceded it. The sites were heavily concentrated in the southern part of the plain, and at all the principal entry points into the valley.

Whether the shift evident between Amuq Phases G and H represented a move towards a more centralized, urban settlement configuration will be an important focus in the next stage of our research. One testable hypothesis is that there was a fundamental reorientation in the economy of the region from an emphasis on agricultural production (staple finance) to the creation of extensive trade networks and a wealth-based finance system. Such an economic arrangement very probably involved the extraction and production of metals from the nearby Amanus or Taurus Mountains, with the relocation of central settlements along the principal trade routes through the region reflecting this shift in economic activity.

Towards this end, an important objective of the 1999 season was to determine the spatial extent of the third millennium levels at Tell Ta'yinat (AS 126). Although the presence of dense cotton coverage prevented a conventional surface survey of the site, the survey team was able to conduct a reasonably intensive investigation, surveying both the upper mound and lower settlement. In order to distinguish between the mound and the lower settlement, the survey areas were subdivided into "Fields" and "Sectors," with individual transects (A through G) conducted around the base of the tell (right). After relocating the excavation units of the original Oriental Institute expedition (only Field IX is currently covered by a cotton processing facility), three "Fields" (A, B, and C) were laid out in the vicinity of the "West Central" excavation area, and transects paced at 10 m intervals. This process was repeated in the lower city in order to determine the spatial extent and date of the outer settlement.

Amuq Valley Regional Survey Project  
Survey of Ta'yinat



Our findings indicate that, although significant portions of the perimeter of the upper mound have been cleared to facilitate agricultural activity, the majority of the site remains intact and accessible. The upper mound currently measures approximately 500 (N-S) X 400 (E-W) m, or 20 ha, and almost certainly formed the extent of the third millennium settlement. The lower settlement seems to have been occupied exclusively during the Iron Age, or Amuq Phase O, and reached at least 700 (N-S) X 500 (E-W) m, or 35 ha at its greatest extent, as Braidwood originally proposed. The lower city seems to have extended primarily to the north and east of the mound. It is possible that it also reached as far south as Ta'yinat al-Saghir (AS 127), although dense cotton coverage prevented our survey team from determining this. Perhaps most importantly for purposes here, the surface survey produced significant quantities of RBBW (left: 10-17) and other third millennium pottery around the edges of the upper mound.

In addition, based on current elevation readings of the West Central Area, it is clear that the Oriental Institute excavations stopped just short of Phase H, I and J levels, leaving substantial portions of the third millennium settlement accessible.

The survey also produced a number of unexpected discoveries. Although most of the stone architecture uncovered during the Oriental Institute excavations has long been removed (or

covered), surprisingly, the door jambs of Gateway III were found intact and in situ at the southern base of the tell in the drainage ditch that borders the northern side of the Antakya-Reyhanli road. In addition, fragments of a decorated (incised) stone architectural fragment and an inscribed basalt stele (Luwian/Neo-Hittite) were recovered in the course of surveying the lower city (below right).

### *CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS*

In addition to continuing the initiative begun during the 1998 AVRPP survey season, the 1999 season sought to develop a more extensive regional record of the third millennium in the Amuq, and determine the extent and accessibility of the Early Bronze Age levels at Tell Ta'yinat. By selectively re-visiting sites and supplementing the data already collected during previous field seasons of the AVRPP survey, these objectives were successfully accomplished. Furthermore, the results of the Ta'yinat survey clearly indicate that it was the predominant settlement on the plain during the third millennium, and should be the focus of any future effort to document the history of the Amuq during this period of dynamic change

### **Hatay Bölgesi Yüzev Arastirmalar 1999**

#### **1999 Amuq Valley Regional Survey**

