

**TAYINAT ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT
2009 SEASONAL REPORT**

[Not for Publication]

Prof. Timothy P. Harrison
Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations
University of Toronto
4 Bancroft Avenue
Toronto, ON, M5S 1C1
CANADA
tim.harrison@utoronto.ca

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INTRODUCTION

The Tayinat Archaeological Project (TAP) completed its sixth season of excavations at Tell Tayinat in 2009, conducted between June 29 and August 14. The expedition senior staff consisted of Dr. Timothy Harrison (Project Director), Dr. Stephen Batiuk (Senior Field Archaeologist), Dr. Heather Snow (Senior Laboratory Supervisor), Dr. David Lipovitch (Zooarchaeologist), Fiona Haughey (Artifact Illustrator), Julie Unruh (Conservator), and Jennifer Jackson (Photographer). The senior Field Supervisors were Dr. Jack Dessel, Dr. Elif Denel, James Osborne and Lynn Welton. The project was also assisted by nineteen archaeology students from Bilkent University, Boğazici University, Harvard University, Mustafa Kemal University, Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Toronto. Mr. Süleyman Tunç served as government representative on behalf of the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums.

The primary objectives of the 2009 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, and (3) expand the excavations in Field 5, along the eastern edge of the upper mound (**fig. 1**).

Field 1 Investigations

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. The 2009 excavations were conducted exclusively in Squares G4.55 and G4.56 (**fig. 2**).

As noted above, the primary objectives of the 2009 season were to complete excavation of the Early Iron Age levels in this area, and to expand the exposure of the Early Bronze Age levels, specifically the late third millennium, or Amuq Phase J, cultural horizon.

Square G4.55

The Early Iron Age levels in Square G4.55 were completely removed by the end of the 2007 season. As a result, excavations have since focused on the Early Bronze Age levels in this area. During the 2007 season, a series of pre-Iron Age walls were identified, and assigned to Field Phase 8. In 2008, these walls were further delineated and their associated depositional layers assigned to the late Early Bronze Age, specifically Amuq Phase J (alternatively known as EB IVB). The 2009 excavations continued these investigations, reaching floor levels by the end of the season. Two discrete architectural phases (FPs 8 and 9) have been identified (**fig. 3**), with the earlier phase preserving the remains of a substantial building comprised of walls more than 1 m in width and almost two meters high in places. The use of internal buttresses, presumably for roof support (or a second storey), represented a striking architectural feature. Parts of two rooms were excavated, with the floor of the western-most room preserving a wealth of restorable pottery vessels, associated material culture (including a cylinder seal), and a partially articulated fish vertebrae (**figs. 4-5**). The pottery associated with FPs 8 and 9 is characteristic of the Amuq Phase J horizon, and included Simple and Painted Simple Wares (**fig. 6**), Smeared Washed Wares, and a limited amount of Brittle Orange Ware.

Square G4.56

The primary aim of the 2009 season in Square G4.56, the fifth 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 primarily with FP 6 were further documented during the 2009 season (**fig. 7**). 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, further emphasizing the importance of textile production in this area during the Early Iron Age.

Field 2 Investigations

Field 2 is primarily occupied by a large, Early Iron Age 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 a temple, oriented southward, and without doubt one of the most important discoveries of the TAP project to date (**figs. 8-9**). The 2009 season continued the 2008 investigations, completing excavation of the northern extent of the building.

The temple 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 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 room. 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 (**fig. 10**). The surface debris also contained a cache of cuneiform tablets, written in Late Assyrian script, and very probably part of a Neo-Assyrian provincial archive or library (**figs. 11-13**).

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. 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, and 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 (**fig. 14**). The Syro-Hittite Expedition also reported finding numerous Hieroglyphic Luwian fragments in the vicinity, including parts of a block-shaped inscription, Tell Tayinat Inscription 2, and it is tempting to propose these all came from a single monument that once stood on the platform (**fig. 15**). 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 8th or (more probably) early 7th centuries BCE, 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 9th or 8th centuries BCE. 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 (**figs. 16-17**).

Despite the stratigraphic break and lack of internal surfaces in the monumental building to the west of the new temple, the associated pottery suggests a Late Iron I/Early Iron II date (ca. 10th-early 9th centuries BCE) for this earlier complex. Since its southern wall was sealed 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 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 on further excavations, and therefore must remain tentative for the time being.

Field 5 Investigations

A new field, Field 5, was opened on the east side of the upper mound in 2008 (**fig. 1**). The primary objectives of the Field 5 excavations are 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, and to gain significant exposures of earlier settlement phases by means of a step trench down the east slope to the lower mound. Two 10 x 10 m squares (F5.98 and 99), were opened in 2008, and a further three

(F5.100, F6.91, and G5.08) in 2009. It is anticipated that additional squares will be opened in future seasons, both on the summit of the mound and as part of the step trench down the eastern slope, stratigraphically linking the upper and lower mounds of the site.

Thus far, the excavations in Squares F5.98 and 99 have revealed part of a large building, possibly the remains of a Late Assyrian courtyard-style house (**figs. 18-20**). More specifically, the excavations have uncovered three small rooms that flank the north side of a larger room, possibly the internal courtyard of the building. The walls of the building were covered with bright white plaster, and in places were preserved to more than 1 m in height. 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 building's southern extension, partially uncovered in Square G5.08, was not well-preserved, due largely to slope erosion. However, part of an east-west wall, very probably the southern wall of the internal courtyard, was uncovered in the northern part of the square. A broad north-south wall in the eastern part of Square F5.99, excavated during the 2008 season, appears to have formed the eastern extent of the building. Dense concentrations of pottery and bone formed a series of superimposed layers that sealed against the external, eastern face of this wall. An east-west wall intersected with the eastern face of this north-south wall, possibly serving as an external buttress. The western extension of the complex remains unexcavated.

The associated pottery recovered from the floors of the building's rooms included Cypro-Geometric and Cypro-Phoenician imports, Black on Red Ware, possible Assyrian Palace Ware (or a local imitation?), and Red Slipped Burnished Wares and local coarse wares typically dated to the late 8th-7th 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'. The associated small finds

also included several stamp seals and clay bullae, suggesting an administrative function for the complex.

The 2009 season also saw expansion of the Field 5 excavations to the east in the form of a 3 m wide step trench, which extended along the northern balk of Squares F5.100 and F6.91 (**fig. 18**). The excavations uncovered a sequence of superimposed walls and associated surfaces spanning the Iron I through late Iron II (or Iron III), with the terminal phases linked directly to the large courtyard building to the west. The preliminary results achieved in 2009 have demonstrated the considerable archaeological potential of this area, and it will therefore be the focus of continued excavations in future field season, with the longer term goal to extend the step trench down the entire eastern slope of the upper mound and into the lower settlement.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

In summary, the 2009 Tayinat Archaeological Project (TAP) excavations have continued to uncover the remarkably well-preserved remains of the Early Bronze and Early Iron Age settlements at Tell Tayinat. In Field 1, excavations below the Early Iron Age levels have now begun to uncover the substantial remains of a large structure dating to 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 a focus of continued excavations in future field seasons.

The 2009 excavations also continued to reveal the impressive remains of Early Iron Age Tayinat. In addition to the Early Iron I (12th Cent. BCE) settlement in Field 1, with its strong Aegean cultural connections, the 2009 season saw completion of the temple excavations in Field 2, which most probably dates to the Iron II (9th-8th 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 Patina, successor to the Early Iron Age Kingdom of Palistin. The numerous Hieroglyphic Luwian 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 discovery of a well-preserved Iron II complex in Field 5 attests to the rich archaeological potential of this largely unexplored area of the site, while the step trench has signaled the possibility of achieving significant exposures of earlier phases in the Bronze and Iron Age sequence at Tell Tayinat. Future TAP field seasons, therefore, will also prioritize efforts and resources in this area of the site.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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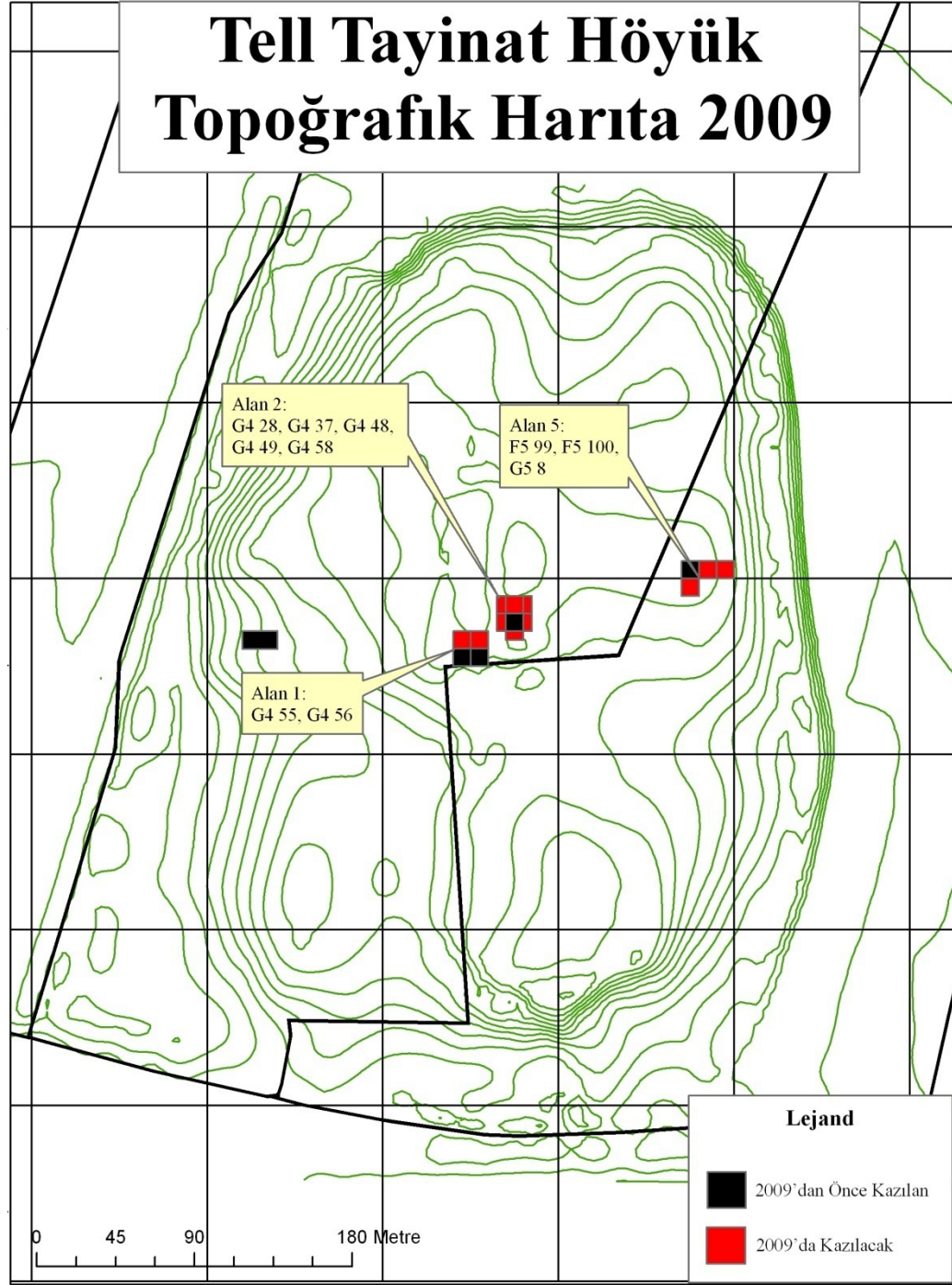


Figure 1



Figure 2

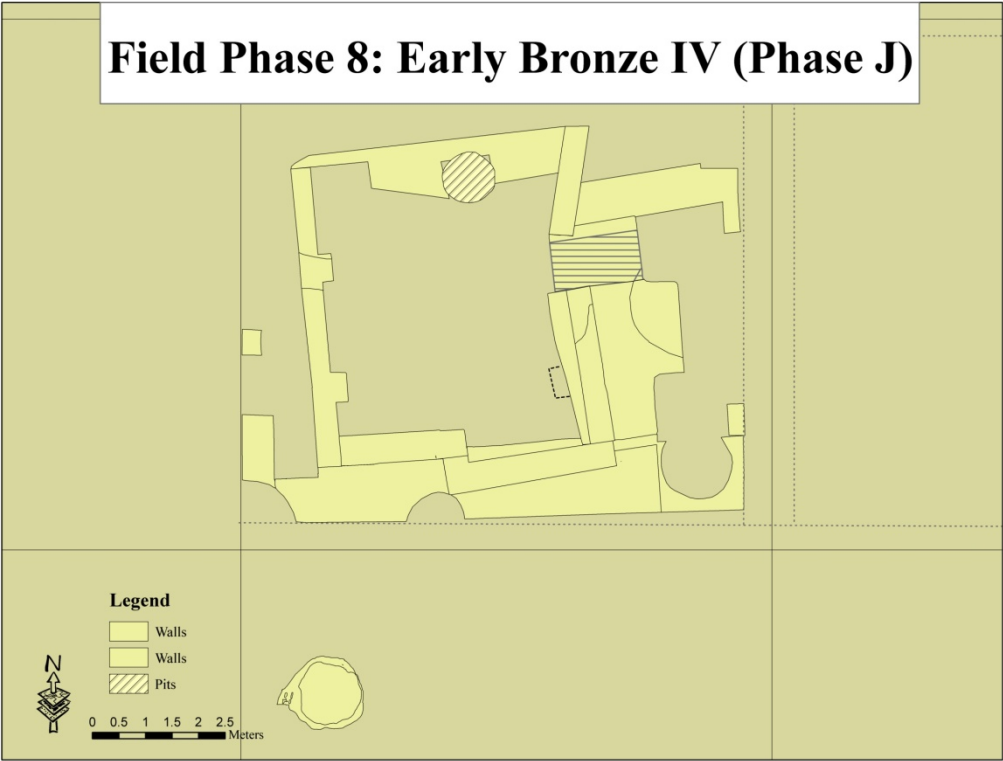


Figure 3



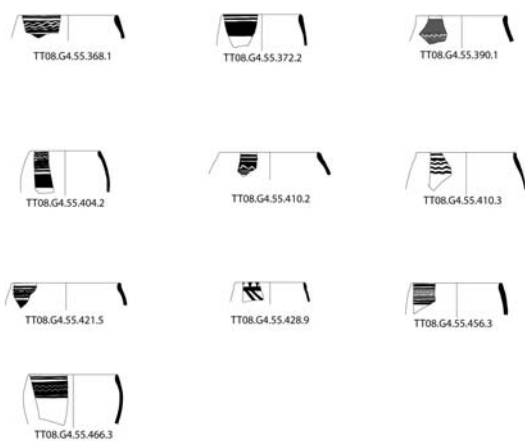
Figure 4



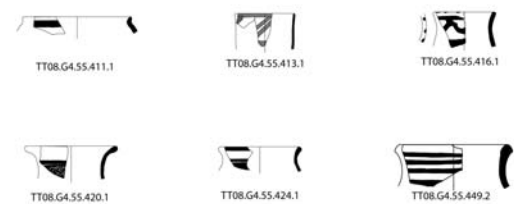
Figure 5

Painted Simple Ware

Goblets (1:4)



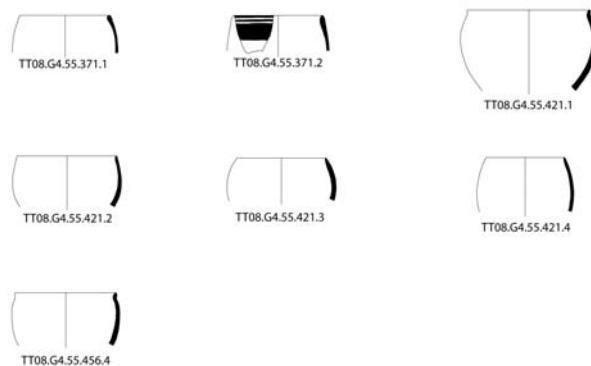
Jars (1:4)



actual size

Simple Ware

Goblets



Jars

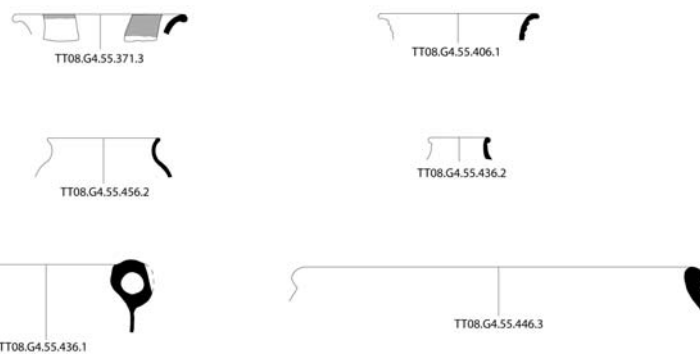


Figure 6

Tell Tayinat 2009 Excavations: Field I

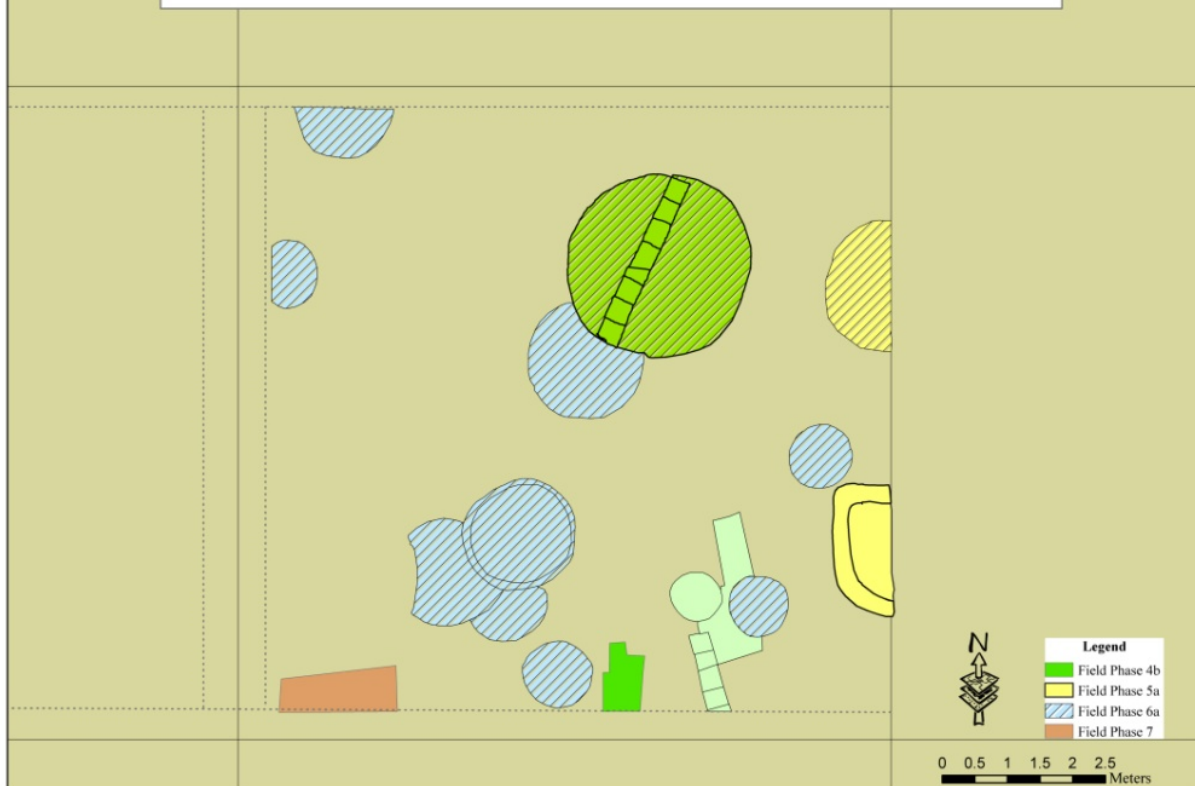


Figure 7



Figure 8



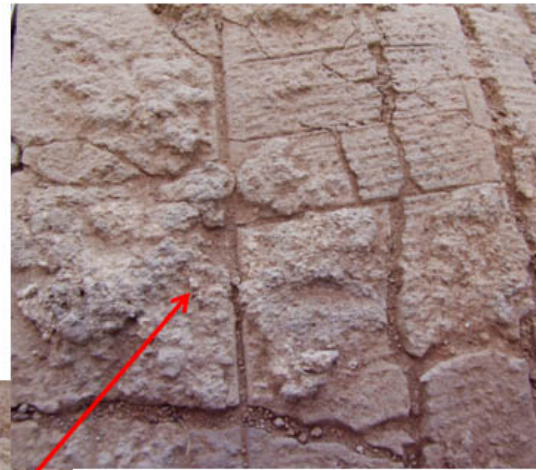
Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



T-1801
Before Extraction

Figure 12



T-1701



T-1923



T-1930

Tablet 'Cache'

Figure 13



B

TELL TA'YINAT. SOUTHEAST CORNER OF BUILDING I, FLOOR 3. A. STONE GLACIS, LOOKING NORTH. B. CONSTRUCTION WITH STONE ORTHOSTATS, LOOKING WEST

Figure 14

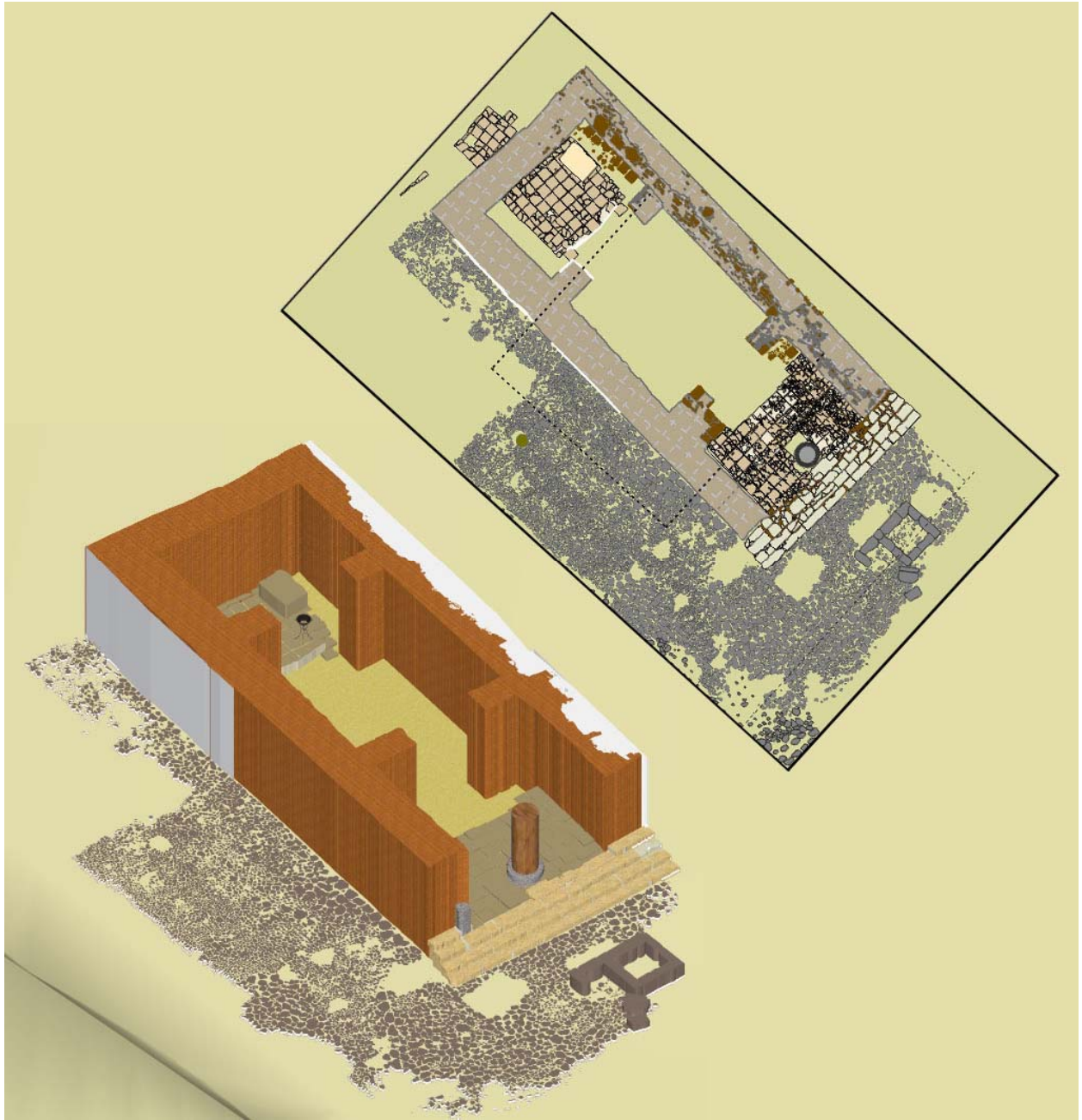
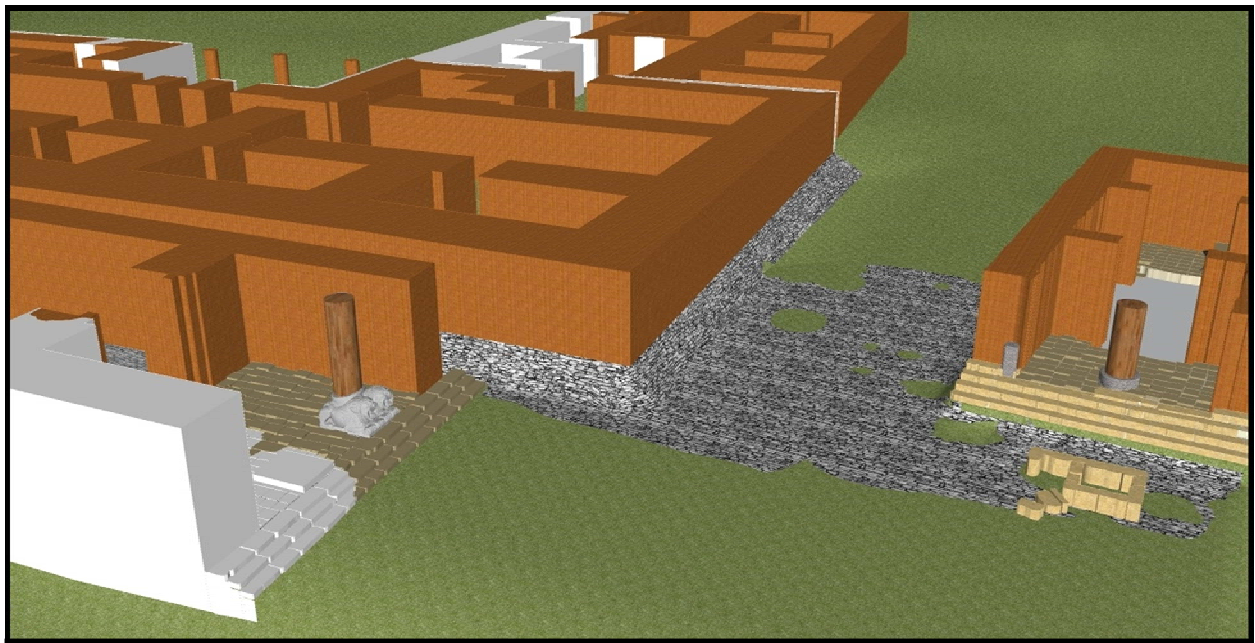


Figure 15



Figure 16



Isometric Reconstruction of the 'Sacred Precinct'

Figure 17

Tell Tayinat 2009: Field V

Iron II 'Courtyard House'



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20