

# The Neo-Assyrian Governor's Residence At Tell Ta'yinat

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## Résumé :

*C'est un fait historique largement accepté que, durant le règne de Tiglath-Phalazar III, s'opéra un virage décisif de la politique étrangère de l'Assyrie. Cependant, il n'y a pas d'évidence certaine qu'il introduisit une série de réformes administratives formelles, il est clair que la rapide expansion des conquêtes assyriennes durant le règne de Tiglath-Phalazar III amena aussi des changements à l'organisation politique et administrative de son empire grandissant. Ces changements incluaient une reconfiguration du système provincial existant, la création d'une bureaucratie plus centralisée, et la mise en place d'une infrastructure administrative provinciale élargie comprenant des officiers gouvernementaux, des installations administratives (ou des résidences) et un réseau de communication et de transport efficaces. Sur le site de Tell Ta'yinat, situé sur la plaine de Amuq au sud-est de la Turquie, les fouilles conduites par l'Expédition Syro-Hittite de l'Université de Chicago dans les années 30 ont révélées les vestiges d'un peuplement de l'époque assyrienne tardive incluant la résidence d'un gouverneur assyrien. Ces vestiges concordent avec la réalité historique de l'établissement d'une capitale provinciale sur ce site à la suite de la conquête de cette région par Tiglath-Phalazar III, et ils offrent ainsi l'opportunité d'étudier la manifestation physique d'une administration assyrienne provinciale durant cette période. Ils révèlent un très précis paysage visuel manifestant et renforçant l'idéologie royale du programme impérial assyrien.*

## Summary:

*It has become a widely accepted historical fact that a decisive shift occurred in Assyrian foreign policy during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III. Although there is no explicit evidence that he introduced a series of formal administrative reforms, it is clear that the rapid expansion of Assyrian conquests during Tiglath-pileser's reign also brought changes to the political organization and administration of his growing empire. These changes included a reconfiguration of the existing provincial system, the creation of a more centralized bureaucracy, and the construction of an extensive provincial administrative infrastructure, with governing officials, distinctively Assyrian administrative facilities (or residences), and an efficient communication and transportation network. At the site of Tell Ta'yinat, situated in the Amuq Plain of southeastern Turkey, excavations conducted by the University of Chicago's Syro-Hittite Expedition in the 1930s uncovered the remains of a Late Assyrian settlement, including an Assyrian governor's residence. These remains correspond to the historically attested establishment of a provincial capital at the site following Tiglath-pileser's conquest of the region, and therefore offer an opportunity to study the physical manifestation of Neo-Assyrian provincial administration during this period. They reveal a carefully crafted visual landscape that both manifested and reinforced the royal ideology of the Assyrian imperial program.*

## Introduction

It has become a widely accepted historical fact that a decisive shift occurred in Assyrian foreign policy during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III. Where earlier rulers were largely content to project Assyrian power through intermittent campaigning and the extraction of tribute from neighbouring regions considered beyond the frontiers of the 'Land of Ashur', the traditional Assyrian heartland, Tiglath-pileser appears to have adopted a strategy that called for the conquest and direct control of subjugated populations. Until relatively recently, however, surprisingly little scholarly attention has focused on the administrative structures and organization that would have been necessary to sustain such a policy. In

particular, given the remarkable military and political successes he enjoyed, and the extended period of *Pax Assyriaca* that ensued, it is reasonable to expect that Tiglath-pileser also established an effective provincial administration, enabling him to integrate vanquished regions and thereby realize his imperial ambitions.

Recent studies have begun to emphasize the material dimensions of imperialism, particularly the physical and visual expressions of imperial power, and to explore their articulation in the archaeological record (cf. Sinopoli 1994; Alcock et al. 2001), including the experience of the Neo-Assyrian empire (Winter 1997; Lumsden 2001; Parker 2001; 2003). In keeping with Professor Young's longstanding

interest in imperial administration, I wish to examine this particular aspect of the Neo-Assyrian experience, viewed from the perspective of Tell Ta'yinat, a large Iron Age site located on the Amuq Plain in southeastern Turkey. First encountered by the University of Chicago's Syro-Hittite Expedition in the 1930s, the Iron Age levels at Tell Ta'yinat preserve the remains of a Late Assyrian settlement, including an Assyrian governor's residence. The Iron Age remains at Tell Ta'yinat thus offer an opportunity to study the physical manifestation of Neo-Assyrian provincial administration during this period.

### Historical Context

The Assyrian empire achieved its mature form and organization in the latter decades of the eighth century BCE. During the preceding half-century, the basic structures of imperial administration were introduced and gradually integrated with pre-existing Assyrian political institutions. The result was a palimpsest, with older administrative structures overlaid by new, more professionalized bureaucracies, needed in particular to assist with the governance of an expanding provincial administration. Not surprisingly, these bureaucratic changes had repercussions for the distribution of power within the Assyrian ruling elite, increasingly consolidating power in the hands of the king, and marginalizing the role and influence of the leading political families of Assyria (Kuhrt 1995: 493, 505–6; see also Postgate 1979; 1992).

These trends came to a head with the ascendance of Tiglath-pileser III to the throne in 744 BCE. Tiglath-pileser seized power of an Assyria weakened by internal turmoil, precipitated in part by the growing independence of powerful provincial governors. After re-establishing firm central control, he embarked on a renewed policy of Assyrian imperial expansion to the west. In contrast to the strategy of his predecessors, however, which had involved a combination of periodic military campaigns, the extraction of tribute, and the formation of local pro-Assyrian alliances, and employed with debatable success since the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III in the ninth century, Tiglath-pileser embarked on a policy of total conquest. The rulers of subjugated regions were deposed, their populations subjected to mass deportations, and their conquered lands reorganized as provinces administered directly by Assyria (Hawkins 1982: 409; Grayson 1991a; Kuhrt 1995: 496–7).

While there is no evidence that Tiglath-pileser III instituted a series of formal administrative 'reforms' as such (Kuhrt 1995: 506), it is clear that the rapid expansion of the Assyrian empire during his reign precipitated adjustments or changes to the existing political organization and administration of the growing empire. In particular, he appears to have significantly reconfigured the provincial system, reducing the size of the provinces within Assyria proper (the 'Land of Ashur'), and thereby also the base of power of their governors, while considerably expanding the system as a whole, as conquered lands were annexed to the heartland (Larsen 1979: 84–86; Postgate 1979: 194; 1992; Grayson 1991b: 203–4).

Administratively, the provinces were governed through a centralized bureaucracy, typically established at the former capitals of vanquished kingdoms, which usually also lent the new provinces their names. Occasionally, secondary settlements were permitted subordinate administrative roles. Each province was headed by a governor (*bēl pihāti*), who was responsible for the civil administration, and a military official (*šaknu*), who handled military matters and the administration of justice. The two positions appear to have been merged, or at least to have become interchangeable, in the eighth century, possibly as part of the administrative restructuring instituted by Tiglath-pileser III (Forrer 1920; Postgate 1973: 8, n. 21), although there is some evidence that both offices continued to maintain their distinct provincial responsibilities even after his reorganization (Pečirková 1977: 212).

The governor's primary duties included the maintenance of the province's road networks and public infrastructure, the levying and collection of taxes, the distribution of land, and the preservation of law and order. He was also responsible for guaranteeing that a dependable local supply base was maintained to support the annual campaigning of the military. A secondary administrative tier was occupied by 'village inspectors' (*rab ālāni*), who monitored the various districts (*qannu*) that made up the provincial hinterland, and reported to the governor. To ensure that the provincial administration functioned efficiently, and in keeping with the dictates of the central government, the provincial governors were expected to submit regular reports to the king, and their administrations were audited by officials who answered directly to the royal court (Pečirková 1977: 213–15; Postgate 1979: 216; Grayson 1991b). The governor's residence or palace, therefore, formed the operational hub of each province's administration, functionally and structurally replicating the royal palace at the regional level.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the Assyrian provincial system, as reorganized by Tiglath-pileser, appears to have concentrated the power and economic wealth of the provinces in their capitals. In time, this may have had the unintended consequence of draining production and investment away from the agricultural hinterland, and their local centres (Postgate 1979: 216–17).

In 743 BCE, after repulsing an Urartian incursion from the north, and consolidating the eastern frontier, Tiglath-pileser commenced his assault on the Syro-Hittite states of northwest Syria (Hawkins 1982: 410–11; Weippert 1982: 395–96; Grayson 1991a: 74–76). This first western campaign culminated in a three-year siege of the city of Arpad (742–740 BCE). In 738, Tiglath-pileser launched a second western campaign. As a pretext for the campaign, he accused Tutammu, king of Unqi (<sup>kur</sup>*un-qi*), of breaking his loyalty oath with Assyria. The consequences of this breach, we are told, were that Tutammu "forfeited his life," Kinalia (<sup>uru</sup>*Ki-na-li-a*; previously Kunulua, see below) his royal city was captured, and many of its citizens were deported.<sup>2</sup> Tiglath-pileser then reconstituted Kinalia as the capital of a new Assyrian province by the same name, and installed a eunuch (*ša rēši*) as

governor (*bēl pīhāti*) (Tadmor 1994: Ann. 25: 3–12; see also Summ. Insc. 6: 20–21; 9: 26–27).<sup>3</sup> In a separate fragment of the annals, highlanders (*kurqu-te-e*; literally Qutaeans) from Bit-Sangibuti, Illilaeans, Nakkabaeans and Budaeans are said to have been settled subsequently in the former territory of Unqi (Tadmor 1994: Ann. 13:4–5).

Kinalia, or Kullania as it appears alternatively in a variety of imperial administrative records, remained under Assyrian control until at least the mid-seventh century BCE. The province received passing mention during the reign of Sennacherib, when its governor, Manzerne, served as eponym in 684 BCE (Hawkins 1982: 425; 1983; Millard 1994: 51). Kullania (*urukul-la-ni-i*) also occurs in a lexical text listing Neo-Assyrian provinces that is generally dated to Ashurbanipal's reign (Fales and Postgate 1995: xiii–xix; No. 1, Col. II.6), as well as in a number of undated administrative texts, mainly lists of provincial contributions (Fales and Postgate 1995: Nos. 5, 6, and 80 [involving sheep]), but including one that lists deportees from various regions within the empire (No. 170).

As I have detailed elsewhere (see mainly Harrison 2001), the earliest Neo-Assyrian reference to the Amuq region of southeastern Turkey dates to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, and occurs in a description of a campaign conducted ca. 870 BCE to subdue a series of kingdoms in northwest Syria, including the kingdom of Patina (*kurpa-ti-na-a-a*) and its capital Kunulua (*uruku-nu-lu-a*) (Grayson 1991c: 216–19, text A.0.101.1, col. iii, lines 55–92a). The account provides a detailed itinerary of the campaign route that clearly situates the kingdom of Patina in the Amuq Plain, and its capital on the southern edge of the plain, just north of the Orontes River, leaving little doubt that Kunulua should be associated with Iron Age Ta'yinat (cf. Hawkins 1982: 389, n. 139; Liverani 1992: 74–75; see further in Harrison 2001; 2005), and not 'Ain Dara, (contra Orthmann 1971: 198, n. 21; 1993: 251, n. 42), or other candidate sites that have been proposed.<sup>4</sup>

Shalmaneser III continued the aggressive campaigning of his father, launching the first of a series of campaigns against western Syria in 858 BCE (Grayson 1996: A.0.102.2, col. i, line 41b–col. ii, line 10a; see also A.0.102.3). His royal annals also report that in later years he received tribute from several rulers of Patina, including one named Qalparunda (Grayson 1996: A.0.102.1.92b–95; A.0.102.2, col. ii, line 21; Hawkins 1982: 391–92; 1995: 94–95). References to Patina and Qalparunda also appear in a number of other inscriptions that date to the reign of Shalmaneser. Significantly, however, in these inscriptions the kingdom is referred to interchangeably as Patina or Unqi. On the fifth register of the engraved bronze bands from the Balawat Gates, for example, 'the people of Unqi' (*kurun-qa-a-a*) are depicted bearing tribute to Shalmaneser (King 1915: Pl. 13; Grayson 1996: A.0.102.69). Similarly, an epigraph on the base of Shalmaneser's throne at Fort Shalmaneser accompanies a scene in which Qalparunda 'the Unqite' is portrayed bringing tribute to the Assyrian king (Grayson 1996: A.0.102.60), while an epigraph on the Black Obelisk refers to Qalparunda as 'the Patinean' (Grayson 1996:

A.0.102.91). Regardless of the possible political or ethnic implications of this interchange (see further in Harrison 2001), it is clear that these inscriptions refer to the same kingdom encountered by Ashurnasirpal II.

Neo-Assyrian sources thus clearly attest to the existence of a small territorial state, referred to alternatively as Patina or Unqi, and situated in the Amuq Plain region during the ninth and eighth centuries BCE, with its royal city identified as Kunulua. Furthermore, these sources consistently point to the large Iron Age site of Tell Ta'yinat as the location of ancient Kunulua. Finally, they attribute the conquest and annexation of the kingdom to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, occurring during his second western campaign in 738 BCE, and his subsequent reconfiguration of its royal city as Kinalia, or Kullania, the provincial capital and seat of the local governor.

## THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF IRON AGE TA'YINAT

### The Syro-Hittite Expedition Excavations.

Large-scale excavations were conducted by the University of Chicago at Tell Ta'yinat over four field seasons between 1935 and 1938 as part of the Syro-Hittite Expedition. The excavations focused primarily on the West Central Area of the upper mound, although excavation areas were also opened on the eastern and southern edges of the upper mound and in the lower settlement (for a more thorough description of the topography and archaeology of the site, see Harrison 2005). In all, the Chicago excavations achieved large horizontal exposures of five distinct architectural phases, or Building Periods, dating to the Iron II and III periods (Amuq Phase O, ca. 950–550 BCE) (Haines 1971: 64–66). A series of isolated soundings below the earliest Phase O floors encountered remains that dated primarily to the late third millennium BCE (Phases I and J; earlier Phase H levels were also uncovered) (Braidwood and Braidwood 1960: 13–14), indicating that a lengthy period of abandonment occurred between the Early Bronze and Iron Age settlements at the site.

In a preliminary study of the second and first millennium pottery (Phases K through O) recovered by the Chicago Expedition, completed as part of a doctoral dissertation, the Phase O sequence was subdivided into four stages, labelled Stages Oa–Od, with ceramic imports and key historical events providing a chronological framework (Swift 1958). Each stage also coincided with changes in the surface treatment of Red-Slipped Burnished Ware (RSBW), the dominant local ceramic tradition during this period. Of particular significance, Swift assigned sherds of imported Attic Geometric pottery to his Stage Oc (ca. 800–725 BCE), and fragments of Corinthian, Attic Black Figure and Assyrian Glazed and Palace wares to his Stage Od (ca. 725–550 BCE) (1958: 154–55).

A number of pottery sherds and small stone artifacts inscribed in Aramaic were also recovered during the Chicago excavations. While this material remains unpublished, one inscription did receive some preliminary attention. A small fragmentary bowl of "late phase O ware" was found inscribed

with the word KNLH (or KNLYH), tantalizingly similar etymologically to Kunulua, capital of Patina/Unqi. The paleography of the inscription suggested a seventh century date (Swift 1958: 191–92). According to the field records of the expedition, the excavators assigned the vessel (T-1064) to Floor 2 of Building I in the West Central Area, which they assigned to the Third Building Period (see also Haines 1971: 66).<sup>5</sup> If we accept this paleographic dating and reading of the inscription, it would place the Third Building Period in Swift's Od sub-phase, while further confirming the historical identification of the site.

### The Late Assyrian Settlement.

Renovations to the complex of buildings in the West Central Area accounted for most of the activity assigned by the excavators to the Third Building Period, including Building I, the most famous of Ta'yinat's *bit hilani* palaces, and the adjacent *megaron*-style temple (Building II) (see Haines 1971: Pl. 107). Fragmentary remains beneath Building IX, a large structure located on a knoll at the southern end of the upper mound, and parts of the fortifications and gate systems leading to the upper mound, including the eastern Gateway VII (Floor 2?), were assigned to this Building Period as well (Haines 1971: 65).

According to the excavators, the Fourth Building Period witnessed the continued occupation of the *bit hilani* in the West Central Area, but saw the abandonment of the temple (see Haines 1971: Pl. 108). Building IX very likely experienced its greatest occupational use during this period (see further below). Building X (Haines 1971: 61; Pls. 88, 110), which appears to have functioned as a series of retaining walls for an elevated platform, or enclosure, that supported Building IX, must also date to this period, although it was assigned tentatively by the expedition to the Fifth Building Period (Haines 1971: 66).

The excavators also assigned the uppermost pavement

(Floor 1) of the adjacent Gateway VII to the Fourth Building Period (Haines 1971: 66; Pl. 110). However, there is some reason to believe that this phase of the gateway should be reassigned to the subsequent Fifth Building Period. In particular, seven limestone orthostats (T-1253–59; see Figure 1; see also McEwan 1937: fig. 10; and Gerlach 2000: Taf. 5), carved in an Assyrian provincial style, were found reused as flagstones in this uppermost pavement (Haines 1971: 60–61),<sup>6</sup> suggesting that the Assyrian phase should be linked to one of the earlier pavements, presumably Floor 2, which the excavators tentatively assigned to the Third Building Period. The orthostats, which depict Assyrian soldiers carrying decapitated heads and treading over their vanquished foes, appear to be part of a single decorative scheme. The soldiers are dressed in attire consistent with depictions on reliefs from the reign of Tiglath-pileser III and the latter decades of the eighth century, including funnel-shaped helmets and short-fringed tunics (Barnett and Falkner 1962: pls. 27, 31, 48; Madhloom 1970: 69–70; Gerlach 2000: 244–46). The uppermost pavement of Gateway VII also continued into the excavation area of Building X, linking it stratigraphically with the walls of this latter structure.

Finally, for the Fifth Building Period, the excavators delineated a series of isolated fragmentary remains confined to the highest parts of the upper mound, which they attributed to the terminal occupational phase in the Iron Age sequence at Tell Ta'yinat (Haines 1971: 66).

### The Assyrian Governor's Residence

Building IX was uncovered during the 1936 season, with further excavations in 1937, and recognized almost immediately by the Chicago expedition as an Assyrian-style palace, closely resembling structures that had been discovered at Tell Ahmar (ancient Til Barsip) and Arslan Tash (ancient Hadātu) (Haines 1971: 61). The building was encountered just below the modern surface of the southern knoll of the



Figure 1. Limestone orthostats in the Assyrian provincial style, depicting soldiers carrying the decapitated heads of vanquished foes (AM 6004-7, located in the Antakya Museum; drawing by F. Haughey).



Figure 2. Plan of Building IX (from Haines 1971: Pl. 109).

upper mound, with little more than the floors of the complex still intact. Although most, if not all, of the existing remains of the building were excavated, it was clear that considerable portions of the original structure were no longer preserved.

The rooms of the complex were arranged around two large courtyards (Loci J-M and G) paved with baked bricks (see Figure 2). Although only one floor level was identified by the excavators, there was ample evidence of renovation, and it seems reasonably certain that the complex experienced at least two distinct phases of construction, and corresponding occupation as well.

The principal room of the building, Room C, was located on the southern edge of the excavated area (Haines 1971: 62; Pl. 84). It was rectangular in shape, measured at least 8.05 x 26.30 m in size, and was paved with small pebbles laid on edge in a lime plaster bed. The walls of the room were made

of unbaked brick, and appear to have been supported by a wood frame, a technique similarly employed in the construction of the *bit hilani* and *megaron* temple. A 20 cm wide channel, the void created by the impression of the lowest wood beam in the wall, separated the room's walls from its paved floor, and contained a mixture of burnt debris, including several pieces of blue-painted plaster. Though not preserved, the main entrance to Room C was probably located in the room's north wall, which had been almost entirely obliterated during the later construction of the south wall of Room H. This would have permitted direct access to the main courtyard to the north. A sill and two pivot stones (Locus A; see Haines 1971: Pl. 84:C) indicate the existence of a doorway in the south wall that would have opened into a room to the south. The westward extension of the pebble pavement at the southwest corner of the room hints of a possible third

doorway in the west wall of the room.

Room C also produced two intriguing installations. A rectangular limestone slab, measuring 1.2 x 2.8 m, was found partially recessed into the south wall of the room. It had a slightly raised border, and sloped gently to a hole (20 cm in diameter) located in its centre. The second installation consisted of two parallel rows of grooved stones, each approximately 5.3 m in length, embedded in the pebble paving toward the west end of the room (Haines 1971: Pl. 84:B).

The floor of the main courtyard (Loci J-M), which should probably also include Locus E, was paved with baked bricks laid on a foundation of packed earth mixed with broken bricks, potsherds and small stones. The pavement had been patched numerous times, and was drained by two subterranean drainage troughs made of limestone blocks (Haines 1971: Pl. 85:A). The remains of several doorways (Loci D, F N, S, T and V) indicate access to at least six adjoining rooms or passageways that led to other parts of the complex. A second, smaller courtyard (Locus G) was located east of Room C, separated by a narrow passageway (Locus D). At least four doorways were preserved around the perimeter of the courtyard, and it was serviced by a drain made of baked brick and stone rubble that appeared to branch into two channels.

Room H represents the primary evidence for a second occupational phase in Building IX. In addition to sealing the north wall of Room C, it encroached into the space of the main courtyard, significantly reducing its southern extent. The walls of Room H were preserved on three sides, and made of unfired brick, with a baked-brick revetment sealing their exterior faces. A doorway in the north wall of Room H provided access to the central courtyard. Room H also contained two stone niches, one embedded in its north wall, which was covered with a red-painted lime plaster, and the second located in its south wall. The floor of the room was made of beaten earth. A drain located above the paved floor of Locus Q, a small room in the northeast corner of the complex (Haines 1971: Pl. 85:B), offered further evidence of a second architectural phase within the occupational life of Building IX.

Despite its poor preservation, as first noted by the Chicago expedition (Haines 1971: 61), the architectural elements and layout of Building IX clearly mark it as a proto-typical Neo-Assyrian palatial complex. Interestingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, the Chicago excavations running concurrently at Khorsabad (ancient Dūr Sharrukin) prompted their excavator, Gordon Loud, to generalize about the formulaic nature of Assyrian architectural planning during this period (1936). Loud's preliminary observations were amplified in a subsequent typological study by Turner (1970), who also emphasized the highly standardized character of Neo-Assyrian palatial construction. In predictable Mesopotamian fashion, the general layout of these palaces consisted of a series of central courtyards, which neatly segregated the various functional units of the complex, including their administrative and residential areas.

The Late Assyrian palace, however, was further

distinguished by the liberal application of the 'reception suite,' which was used to delineate the principal audience hall or throne room, additional ceremonial areas, and the residential apartments of the palace. The typical suite was comprised of a reception room, a series of subsidiary rooms that served as the 'retiring chamber' or bedroom apartment for the king or official, and a small room furnished as a 'bathroom'. The reception room typically was equipped with a variety of stone fixtures, including a running track for a brazier in the centre of the room, a flat rectangular slab (usually with a plugged hole in the centre) set in the floor against a wall, and various cultic niches (Turner 1970: 181-88). The addition of a bathroom (probably for ritual ablutions) in the principal reception suite, directly adjacent to the throne dais, appears to have been a unique feature of the larger palaces constructed during the eighth and seventh centuries (Turner 1970: 190-93).

The modular replication of the reception suite is perhaps best exemplified in the royal palace and administrative residences constructed by Sargon II at Khorsabad. However, the pattern is also well-attested in the numerous Neo-Assyrian palatial complexes that excavations have uncovered in the other royal cities of Assyria (for the full survey, see Turner 1970), including the eighth century Governor's Palace at Nimrud (ancient Kalhu; cf. Postgate 1973: 3-7; fig. 1), as well as in important Neo-Assyrian provincial centres, such as Dūr-katlimmu/Tell Sheikh Hamad (Kühne 1994: 64-65), Guzāna/Tell Halaf (von Oppenheim 1950: Plan 2), Hadātu/Arslan Tash and Til Barsip/Tell Ahmar (for general plans, see Heinrich 1984). Further to the west, a governor's residence is evident in the Late Assyrian levels at Sam'al/Zincirli (von Luschan 1893: Taf. 22), located in the Islahiye Valley that leads north from the Amuq Plain into the Anatolian highlands.

Neo-Assyrian governors' residences also have been found as far a field as the southern Levant at the sites of Ayyelet Ha-Shahar, near Hazor (Reich 1975; 1992: 215; Lipschitz 1990), Megiddo (Buildings 1052 and 1369 in Stratum III; Amiran and Dunayevsky 1958; Reich 1992: 216-18; 2003), and very possibly also at Dor (Stern 1994: 134-38). Additionally, in Transjordan, Assyrian-style residences have been excavated on the citadel in Amman (Humbert and Zayadine 1992; Burdajewicz 1993: 1248; Harrison 2002: 17-18), and at Buseirah in southern Jordan (Bennett 1978; Reich 1992: 219-20). The establishment of these residences almost certainly coincided with the annexation of large portions of the region as Assyrian provinces, following the successive campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II and Sennacherib in the final decades of the eighth century, as attested in their royal annals (Na'aman 1995). These residences should also be seen within the context of the growing evidence for a broader Assyrian building program in the region during this period (Fritz 1979; Nigro 1994: 452-56), witnessed most convincingly at Gezer (Reich and Brandl 1985; Reich 1992: 219), Tel Miqne/Ekron (Gitin 1997: 91-93), Tell Jemmeh (Van Beek 1993: 670-72), Tel Sera' (Oren 1993: 1333-34),

Tell Abu Salima (Reich 1984; 1992: 221–22) and Tel Ruqesh (Oren et al. 1986). This activity appears to have been aimed primarily at stabilizing the region and expanding its economic productivity (Gitin 1997; 2003).

In light of the existing documentary and archaeological evidence, therefore, we can confidently identify Building IX at Tell Ta'yinat as the residence of a Neo-Assyrian governor, and date its construction to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, or perhaps slightly later. As such, it represents a physical manifestation of the bureaucratic order imposed by Tiglath-pileser III as part of the imperial administration he installed to maintain control over his expanding empire. In this capacity, it would also have stood as an effective visual symbol of Assyrian imperial ambitions, and an ever-present reminder to the local community of Assyria's ability to project its considerable military power and protect its interests.

### Miscellaneous Small Finds.

The genius of Assyrian imperial ideology lay in the degree to which it was expressed through material form. This extended beyond standardized architectural styles to include large-scale representational art forms such as wall relief and sculpture, as well as craft industries such as ceramic-fine-ware production. Art historical studies have emphasized the programmatic nature of Neo-Assyrian royal art, and the remarkably sophisticated use of the written word to construct composite visual narratives that conveyed carefully crafted ideological messages to their intended audiences.<sup>7</sup> These messages often were nuanced or tailored to very specific audiences, sometimes representing very different constituencies, as Porter's analysis of the Esarhaddon stela recovered from Til Barsip and Sam'al has demonstrated (Porter 2000a and b; 2001). The result, in essence, was a visual symbolic landscape that both projected and reinforced the royal ideology of the imperial program, in which the Assyrian king was portrayed as supreme ruler of the known world, imbued with absolute authority as the earthly representative and human embodiment of Ashur (Winter 1997; Tadmor 1999).

Although the evidence is fragmentary, and unfortunately suffers from poor context, several finds from the Chicago excavations hint at the ideological program of the Neo-Assyrians at Tell Ta'yinat. In addition to the carved orthostats uncovered in Gateway VII, the Chicago excavations recovered several Late Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions, including four inscribed stone fragments, apparently parts of sculptures or commemorative stelae, reportedly five clay tablets (their current location, however, remains unknown), and a stone cylinder seal (Swift 1958: 183–84). The most informative Neo-Assyrian inscription, however, is a dedication “for the life of Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria,” engraved on an ornamental copper disk (T-3264) found in the vicinity of Building I, and assigned by the excavators to its second level (or Floor 2) (Swift 1958: 183; Brinkman 1977: 62). If correctly attributed to Floor 2, this votive would date the Third Building Period, and possibly also Swift's Od ceramic sub-phase, which (as noted earlier) produced the highly

distinctive Assyrian Glazed and Palace Wares (though only in small quantities, see Swift 1958: 155), to the period following Tiglath-pileser's conquest of Unqi in 738 BCE.

The Chicago excavations also produced a small bronze figure of a kneeling male, bearded to the eyes and holding a vase (T-632; McEwan 1937: fig. 9), features that occur broadly on human figural representations in Mesopotamian art, particularly glyptic (cf. Collon 1987; Frankfort 1996). The Ta'yinat figure, however, may have formed the head of a linchpin for an Assyrian chariot wheel, as proposed for a similar, more complete piece found in the Burnt Palace at Nimrud, and dated by its excavator to the eighth century BCE (Mallowan 1966: 208–9, fig. 142). Though several centuries earlier in date, similar bronze chariot linchpins have also been found at the Iron Age sites of Ashkelon and Tel Mique (Ekron) in the southern Levant (see King and Stager 2001: Ill. 46).<sup>8</sup> Although not provenanced in the field records, the Ta'yinat find was attributed by McEwan to the “building which probably housed the Assyrian governor” (see figure caption in 1937: fig. 9).

### Conclusion

Numerous questions remain concerning the stratigraphic phasing and layout of the Late Assyrian settlement at Tell Ta'yinat. In particular, it is not clear that the two final floor levels (Floors 2 and 1) in Building I, which were assigned by the excavators to their Third and Fourth Building Periods respectively, should both be attributed to the Assyrian period, as Haines proposed (1971: 65–66). In this context, it is important to note that the original excavators were unable to separate Floor 2 from the earlier Floor 3 levels in most of the building's rooms. Indeed, the most significant renovations to Building I appear to have occurred with the construction of Floor 1, when the interior of the building was completely rebuilt over a thick layer of destruction debris, including the relocation of the building's internal doorways, and a widening of the porch opening (Haines 1971: 44–46, 51–52).

If in fact only the Fourth Building Period should be assigned to the era of Assyrian hegemony, the construction activity attributed to this architectural phase would indicate a more thorough transformation of the site following the establishment of Assyrian rule. In this reconstruction of the occupational sequence, the modestly renovated *bit hilani* of Building I would have been eclipsed by the much larger, and perhaps grander, complex of Building IX, with all of its visual manifestations of Assyrian power and authority, including the commanding view it would have enjoyed on the elevated platform of Building X, and the imposing approach through Gateway VII with its carved reliefs of Assyrian assault troops. The destruction and abandonment of the *megaron*-style temple (Building II) at the end of the Third Building Period would also accentuate a break with the religious activity of the preceding era.

As we have seen, the construction of royal palaces (and the foundation of new royal cities) was a defining characteristic of the Neo-Assyrian period, and reflects the central

institutional role the palace played in creating the 'landscapes of power' that facilitated the consolidation of royal authority and the formation of the Assyrian empire (cf. Winter 1993; Lumsden 2001: 34–37). The standardization of Assyrian palatial construction in the eighth century, and the modular replication of these distinctive structures at provincial centres throughout the empire during the reigns of Tiglath-pileser III and his successors, therefore, should be seen not only as evidence of Assyrian bureaucratic ingenuity and efficiency, but as the physical embodiment of Assyrian imperial ideology as well. As such, the governor's residence, together with its human occupant, in essence stood as visual symbols that both manifested and reinforced the royal ideology of the Assyrian imperial program, with the king elevated as supreme ruler, instilled with divinely sanctioned authority, and responsible for maintaining order throughout the imperial realm.

Recent settlement pattern studies have shown that Neo-Assyrian imperial policies extended into the countryside as well. In support of the frequent Assyrian references to mass deportation, there is growing archaeological evidence of an extensive resettlement process during this period, including an expansion, or 'great dispersal', of settlement into the rural hinterland (Wilkinson 2003: 128–33; see also Wilkinson 1995; Wilkinson and Barbanes 2000; Morandi 1996; 2000). To facilitate the integration and assimilation of these displaced populations, old loyalties were aggressively replaced with new local alliances loyal to Assyria, and a class structure cultivated that crosscut traditional ethnic and political boundaries. At the same time, local cultural traditions (including religious practices) were tolerated, and bilingualism was permitted, even encouraged (e.g. the infamous exchange between the Assyrian *rab šaqe* and Judean officials in 2 Kings 18:26–37). The result was the emergence of a multi-ethnic, trans-regional culture, and the formation of a loosely defined 'Assyrian' identity amongst local ruling elites that transcended deeply rooted regional loyalties (Lumsden 2001: 37–43). As Lumsden (2001: 39) and others have observed, the methods and strategies Tiglath-pileser and his successors employed to create this new imperial society reoccur in other empires in history. There is thus no denying their central role in fostering the *Pax Assyriaca* that ensued, nor their lasting impact on the political culture of ancient Near Eastern society.

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 For an instructive look at the administrative life of a governor's palace, as revealed through its archive, see Postgate's (1973) study of the archive recovered from the governor's palace at Kalhu (modern Nimrud).
- 2 The account of the campaign is preserved on a fragmentary panel recording the annals of Tiglath-pileser that was recovered from the Southwest Palace at Nimrud, undoubtedly in secondary reuse from the nearby Central Palace built by Tiglath-pileser (Tadmor 1994: 10–11). The account I present here differs slightly from my earlier reconstruction of these events (see Harrison 2001: 121).
- 3 For more on the role of eunuchs in the Assyrian bureaucracy, see Grayson (1995).
- 4 Other earlier candidates have included Tell Jindaris/Jinderez Tepe (AS 58) (Olmstead 1918: 248, n. 67; Braidwood 1937: 25, n. 3), Chatal Hoyuk (AS 167) (Gelb 1935: 189), and Tell Kuna'na (Elliger 1947: 71), located near the Afrin River.
- 5 Unfortunately, efforts to locate the inscription, either in Chicago or in Antakya, have thus far proven unsuccessful.
- 6 Haines (1971: 60) refers incorrectly to only six orthostats (T-1253–58).
- 7 The literature is already extensive, and growing. For relatively recent summaries, see Winter (1997) and Russell (1998).
- 8 I thank D. Lipovitch for drawing these parallels to my attention.



