

# Temples, Tablets and the Neo-Assyrian Provincial Capital of Kinalia

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## Abstract

*Excavations at Tell Tayinat, located on the Plain of Antioch in southeast Turkey, have uncovered the remains of a Late Assyrian settlement (ca. 8<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> Cent. BCE), including an Assyrian governor’s residence and, most recently, a temple and a cache of cuneiform tablets dating to this period. Historical sources attest that Tayinat (ancient Kunulua) was destroyed by Tiglath-pileser III in 738 BCE, and then transformed into an Assyrian provincial capital equipped with its own governor and imperial administration. The Tayinat excavations thus offer an opportunity to examine the physical dimensions of Neo-Assyrian imperialism. This paper presents the results of the Syrian-Hittite Expedition’s excavations at Tell Tayinat in the 1930s, together with the latest discoveries of the ongoing Tayinat Archaeological Project from this period. They reveal a carefully crafted visual landscape that both manifested and reinforced the ideology of the Assyrian imperial project.*

## Résumé

*Les fouilles à Tell Tayinat, dans la plaine d’Antioche au sud-est de la Turquie, ont mis au jour les restes d’un site Néo-assyrien (environ 8<sup>ème</sup> et 7<sup>ème</sup> siècles av. J.-C.), incluant la résidence d’un gouverneur assyrien ainsi que, plus récemment, un temple et un dépôt de tablettes cunéiformes datant de cette période. Les sources historiques attestent de la destruction de Tayinat (l’ancienne Kunulua) par Teglath-phalasar III en 738 av. J.-C. et de sa transformation en capitale provinciale assyrienne, dotée de son administration impériale et de son propre gouverneur. Les fouilles de Tayinat offrent ainsi l’occasion d’examiner les aspects géophysiques de l’impérialisme néo-assyrien. Cet article présente les résultats des fouilles de l’expédition syro-hittite (Syrian-Hittite Expedition) à Tell Tayinat dans les années 1930s ainsi que les récentes découvertes du projet archéologique de Tayinat (Tayinat Archaeological Project) en cours. Ces résultats révèlent un paysage visuel soigneusement modelé qui démontre et renforce l’idéologie du projet impérial assyrien.*

In 743 BCE, after repulsing an Urartian incursion from the north and consolidating his eastern frontier, Tiglath-pileser III launched an assault on the Syrian-Hittite states of northwest Syria.<sup>1</sup> This first western campaign culminated in a three-year siege of the city of Arpad (742–740 BCE). It was followed, in 738 BCE, by a second western campaign. As a pretext, Tiglath-pileser 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,<sup>2</sup> were that Tutammu “forfeited his life,” Kinalia (<sup>uru</sup>Ki-na-li-a), his royal city was captured and many of its citizens were deported. Tiglath-pileser declares that he 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*). In a separate fragment of the royal annals,<sup>3</sup> captives from elsewhere are reported to have been settled in the former territory of Unqi. 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.<sup>4</sup>

The earliest Assyrian reference to the Amuq region of southeastern Turkey date to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, and includes a description of a campaign conducted ca. 870 BCE to subdue a series of kingdoms in northwest Syria, including

the kingdom of Patina (<sup>kur</sup>pa-ti-na-a-a) and its capital Kunulua (<sup>uru</sup>ku-nu-lu-a).<sup>5</sup> 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 the large Iron Age mound of Tell Tayinat. Later Assyrian sources, culminating with Tiglath-pileser’s conquest and annexation in 738 BCE, confirm the existence of a small territorial state, referred to alternatively as Patina or Unqi, that controlled the North Orontes Valley region during the ninth and eighth centuries BCE, with Kunulua, its royal city, located at Tell Tayinat. As I have stated previously (Harrison 2005), Iron Age Tayinat thus offers an exceptional opportunity to examine the transformation of a Neo-Hittite royal city into a Neo-Assyrian provincial capital. In the remainder of this paper, I will summarize the Neo-Assyrian presence at Tayinat, including the most recent results of the Tayinat Archaeological Project’s excavations. The evidence reveals a carefully constructed urban layout that both manifested and reinforced the royal ideology of the Assyrian imperial program.

### The Syrian-Hittite Expedition Excavations

Today, Tell Tayinat forms a large, low-lying mound 1.5 km east of Demirköprü on the northern bend of the Orontes River, at the point where it turns west and winds around the southern edge of the Amuq Plain (see **Fig. 1** in Welton, this issue, page 16). The site consists of an upper and lower mound, with the lower mound now hidden by a thick alluvial accumulation characteristic of the Orontes floodplain within the Amuq. The site sits just north of the modern Antakya-Reyhanlı road, and measures approximately 500 m (E-W) by 700 m (N-S).

Large-scale excavations were conducted by the University of Chicago at Tell Tayinat over four field seasons between 1935 and 1938 as the Syrian part of the Syrian-Hittite Expedition. Since the results of the Syrian-Hittite Expedition's excavations have been described in detail elsewhere (Haines 1971; Harrison 2001; 2005; Batiuk et al. 2005), I will only summarize them briefly here. The excavations focused primarily on the West Central Area of the upper mound (see **Fig. 2** in Welton, this issue, page 17), although excavation areas were also opened on the eastern and southern edges of the upper mound and in the lower settlement. 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).

According to the Chicago excavators, Building I, the most famous of Tayinat's *bīt hilāni* palaces, and the adjacent *megaron*-style temple (Building II) were constructed during the Second Building Period (for detailed descriptions of these structures, see Haines 1971: 44–55), the most extensive and best preserved architectural phase uncovered in the West Central Area, which they dated to the late ninth and eighth centuries (ca. 825–720 BCE), based largely on the presence of Hieroglyphic Luwian fragments that were found on or below the floors of these two buildings (Haines 1971: 66).

Renovations to the West Central Area complex accounted for most of the activity assigned to the Third Building Period, which the excavators dated to the latter part of the eighth and early seven centuries (ca. 720–680 BCE; Haines 1971: 65–66), or specifically the period of Assyrian occupation. Platform XV, a large elevated rectangular structure, approximately 46 m (E-W) X 87 m (N-S), erected flanking the east side of the West Central Area complex (Haines 1971: 43–44), represented one of the most significant additions during the Third Building Period. The Fourth Building Period appears to have coincided with substantial Assyrian construction activity.<sup>6</sup> According to the excavators, the Fourth Building Period witnessed the continued occupation of the *bīt hilani* in the West Central Area, but apparently the abandonment of the temple (Haines 1971: 65). Significant new construction occurred in the form of Building IX, uncovered during the 1936 and 1937 seasons on a knoll in the southeastern quadrant of the upper mound (see **Fig. 2** in Welton, this issue, page 17).

The rooms of Building IX were arranged around two large courtyards paved with baked bricks (**Fig. 3**). 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, 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 Room C were made of unbaked brick, and appear to have been supported by a wood frame, a technique similarly employed in the construction of the *bīt hilāni* and *megaron* temple. Pieces of blue-painted plaster found in the room debris indicate its walls were once painted. 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, pierced through its centre. The second installation consisted of two parallel rows of grooved stones, each approximately 5.3 m in length, embedded in the pebble pavement toward the west end of the room (Haines 1971: Pl. 84:B). The one preserved doorway to the room had a stone threshold and two pivot stones.

Despite its poor preservation, as first noted by the Chicago Expedition (Haines 1971: 61), the architectural elements and layout of Building IX identify it as an Assyrian-style palatial complex. Interestingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, the Chicago excavations running concurrently at Khorsabad (ancient Dūr Sharrukīn) 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 typical 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 replication 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 main 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' for ritual ablutions, usually 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 well-attested throughout the royal cities of Assyria, as well as at numerous other Neo-Assyrian provincial centers during this period (see further in Harrison 2005).

A series of large walls, identified as Building X (Haines 1971: 61; Pls. 88, 110), located to the northeast of Building



Figure 3. Plan of Building IX (adapted by S. Batiuk from Haines 1971: Pl. 109).

IX, appear to have functioned as retaining walls for an elevated platform, or enclosure, that supported Building IX. They therefore must also date to this period, although they were assigned tentatively by the Expedition to their 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 Harrison 2005: 26, fig. 1; 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), suggesting that the Assyrian phase should be linked to one of the earlier pavements, presumably Floor 2, which the excavators tentatively assigned to their 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.

Finally, for the Fifth Building Period, the Syrian-Hittite Expedition delineated a series of isolated fragmentary features confined to the highest parts of the upper mound, which they attributed to the terminal Iron Age occupational phase at Tell Tayinat (Haines 1971: 66).

The Syrian-Hittite Expedition also recovered a number of miscellaneous finds, unfortunately largely from poorly preserved contexts, which hint of the Neo-Assyrian presence at Tell Tayinat (see further in Harrison 2005: 29). These included several Late Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions, both inscribed stone monument fragments and clay tablets, a number of cylinder seals, several metal objects, one notably a composite metal roundel inscribed with the royal name of Tiglath-pileser III, and small quantities of the distinctive

Assyrian Glazed and Palace Wares.

### The Tayinat Archaeological Project Investigations

Following preliminary field seasons in 1999, 2001 and 2002 devoted to surveying and mapping the site (see further in Batiuk et al. 2005), targeted excavations were resumed at Tell Tayinat with a brief two-week exploratory season in 2004, as part of the University of Toronto's Tayinat Archaeological Project (TAP). The TAP investigations expanded to full-scale excavations in 2005, and have continued on an annual basis since (for yearly reports, see Harrison 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009a; 2010b). The Late Assyrian levels, or Iron III horizon (ca. 725–600 BCE), have been encountered primarily in three of the excavation areas: Fields 1, 2 and 5 (see **Fig. 2** in Welton, this issue, page 17). Since the excavations in each of these fields are ongoing, the results presented here are necessarily preliminary.

#### Field 1 Excavations

The Field 1 excavations extended laterally the trial probe opened in 2004, expanding the area of excavation southward by opening four 10x10 m squares (G4.55, G4.56, G4.65, and G4.66), for a total area of 400 sq m. To date, the Field 1 excavations have identified eight distinct stratigraphic Field Phases (FP), with the best preserved cultural periods dating to the early Iron I (FPs 3–6) and Early Bronze Age (FPs 7–8; specifically EB IVB, or late third millennium BCE).

Sealing the Early Iron Age sequence were the remains of large mud brick structural foundations for the north and south walls of Building II (FP 2), first uncovered during the University of Chicago excavations in the 1930s, when it was identified as a *megaron*-style temple, and dated to the late ninth century BCE (or Iron IIB; Amuq Phase Oc). Most of this impressive structure, which once was graced by a flanking pair of columns supported by large basalt lion figures, was no longer preserved, having been destroyed by agricultural cultivation carried out since the completion of the Chicago excavations. Nevertheless, in 2004, our excavations succeeded in uncovering portions of the cobbled surface that paved the central room of the sanctuary, the north and south piers that separated this room from the front porch of the building, three flat stone pavers, which had once formed part of the stepped approach to the building, and the mud brick foundation that had supported the east façade of the building. Though from heavily disturbed contexts, the associated pottery dated predominantly to the Iron II, and included large quantities of Red Slip Burnished Ware.

#### Field 2 Excavations

In 2005, excavations were also initiated to the north of Field 1 in the vicinity of Building I, the principal *bīt hilāni* uncovered by the Syrian-Hittite Expedition. The primary objectives of the excavations in this area, designated Field 2 (see **Fig. 2** in Welton, this issue, page 17), were to determine whether anything remained of Building I, and then to excavate earlier levels associated with a large structure identified as Building

XIV by the Syrian-Hittite Expedition, which they assigned to their First Building Period, and thereby better establish the stratigraphic relationships between these two cultural phases.

The 2005 excavations, limited to a 10 X 10 m square, proceeded to uncover a series of large mudbrick walls immediately below the modern plow zone. Our excavations have since exposed more than 600 sq m of a large monumental structure. The walls of the building average more than 3 m 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 3 m 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 Syrian-Hittite Expedition's Building XIV.

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. Unfortunately, the Syrian-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, two new

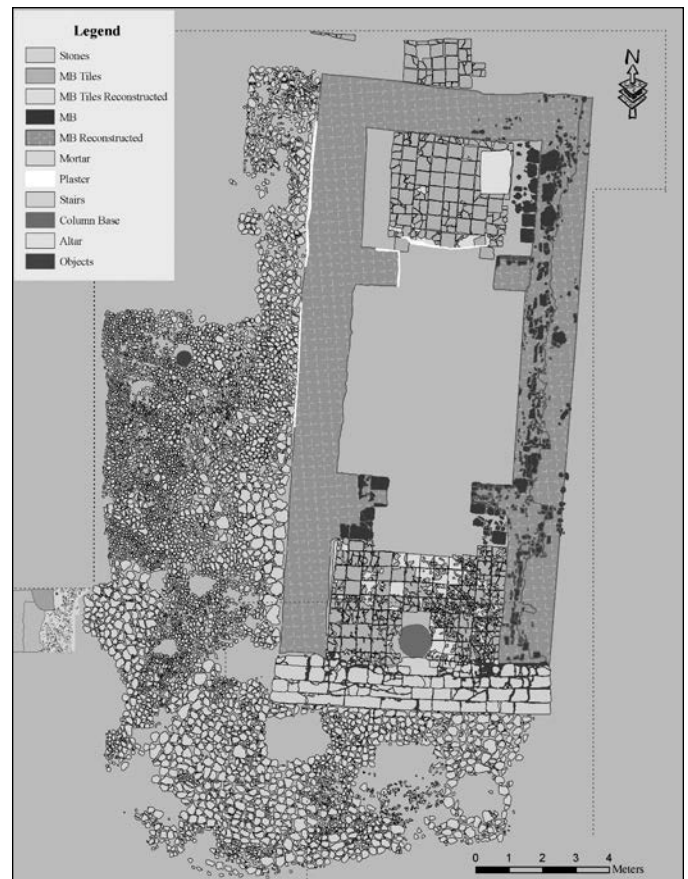


Figure 4. Plan of Temple XVI (created by S. Batiuk).

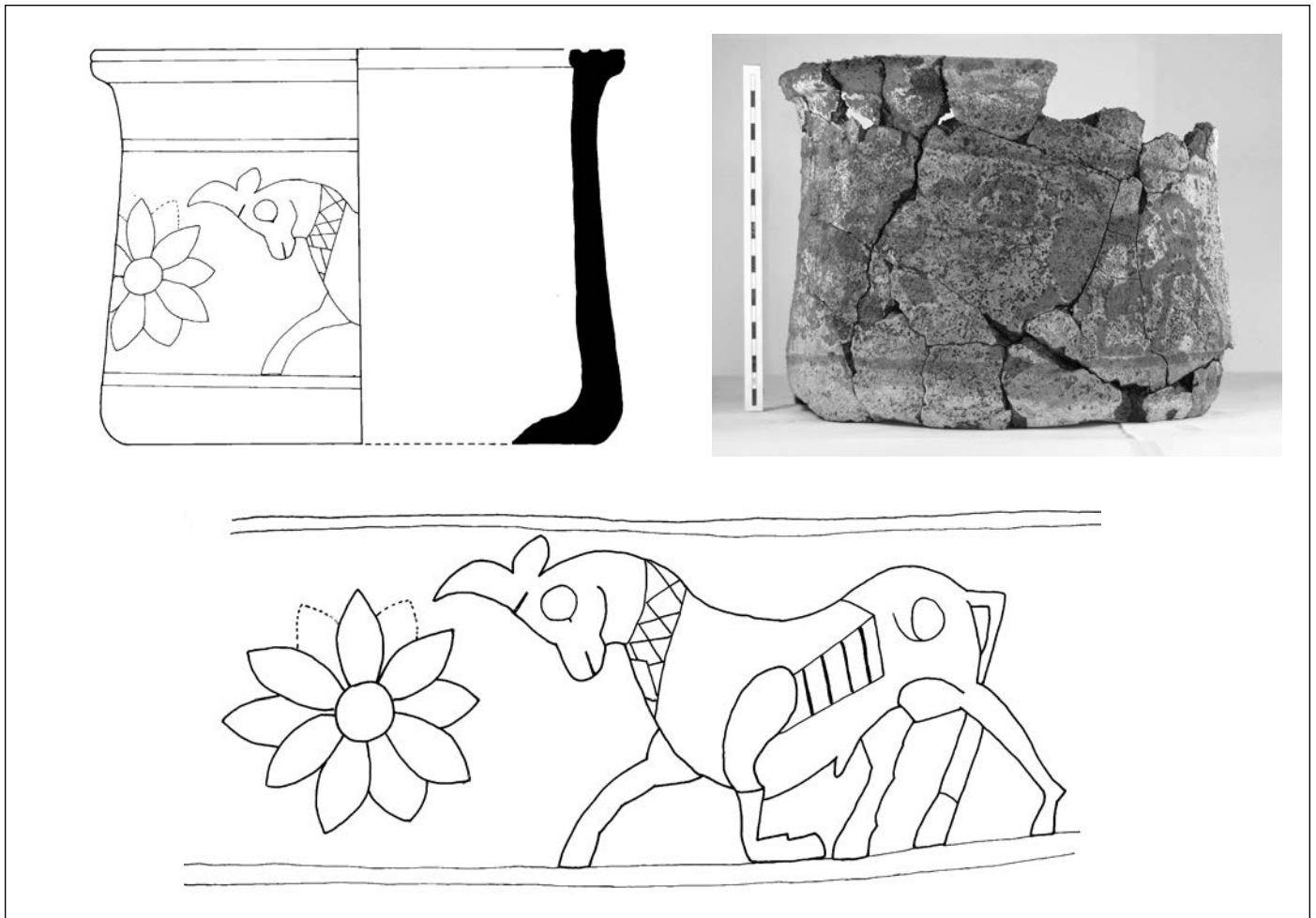


Figure 5. Assyrian Glazed Ware jar found in front of the raised podium in Temple XVI (drawings by F. Haughey, and photograph by J. Jackson).

squares were opened 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) revealed the well-preserved remains of an Iron Age temple (Fig. 4), which we have designated Building (or Temple) XVI.

Temple XVI, which measured 9 X 21 m in size, was approached from the south by means of a monumental stone 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, which supported 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 a ceramic tile-paved surface, 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 this 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 fixtures, perhaps for a door. 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 temple's outer walls, vivid evidence of the intense conflagration that had consumed the structure.

A second set of piers separated the central room from a small back room, the inner sanctum, 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 mud brick tiles, and accessed by steps in its two southern corners. A rectangular, free-standing

structure, possibly an altar, stood on the eastern side of the platform. The room had also been burned intensely by fire, preserving a wealth of cultic paraphernalia found strewn across the podium and around its base, including gold, bronze and iron implements, libation vessels, an Assyrian Glazed Ware jar (fig. 5), and other ornately decorated ritual objects.

The surface debris also contained an assortment of fragmented cuneiform tablets written in Late Assyrian script. The analysis completed to date has identified at least eleven discrete texts, all except one preserving literary or historical documents. The most notable document, T-1801, records an oath imposed by Esarhaddon on the governor of Kinalia in 672 BCE, providing a *terminus post quem* for the final use-phase of Temple XVI. For a preliminary description and assessment of this remarkable temple corpus, see Lauinger's article in this issue.

The construction methods used to build the exterior walls of Temple XVI are identical to those typically found in the other public buildings of the West Central Area, including use of 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, 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 in front of the temple entrance directly to a section of pavement uncovered by the Syrian-Hittite Expedition in a probe they 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 limestone orthostats (depicted in front of the entrance to Temple XVI in fig. 4; see also fig. 6), which perhaps served as support for a free-standing monument (see Haines 1971: 45, pls. 74B and 103). The Syrian-Hittite Expedition also reported finding numerous Hieroglyphic Luwian fragments in the vicinity, including parts of a block-shaped inscription, Tell Tayinat Inscription 2 (see detailed description and commentary in Hawkins 2000: 367–68), and it is tempting to infer that they formed part of a monument which once stood on this platform. Unfortunately, nothing of the original structure remains, having been removed, or destroyed, following the Chicago excavations.

### The 'Sacred Precinct'

Since its discovery in 1936 by the Syrian-Hittite Expedition, Building II at Tayinat has been upheld as an exemplar of Iron Age Levantine religious architecture. Many scholars, including its original excavators, have identified Building II as a *megaron*-style temple, part of a long-standing West Syrian (or West Semitic) religious tradition. Biblical scholars have largely favored this view, drawing visual inspiration for the various components of the Solomonic temple described in I Kings 6. However, others have emphasized the building's similarities with Neo-Assyrian religious architecture, most notably its *langraum*-like plan, and the magnificently carved double-lion column base(s) that once graced its entrance. These diverging views have all suffered from the limited contextual information available to date.

The TAP excavations now offer an opportunity to clarify the lingering stratigraphic and chronological questions that concern this intriguing complex, while clarifying the broader functional role of the Tayinat temples within the religious life



Figure 6. Isometric reconstruction of the 'Sacred Precinct' in the West Central Area at Tayinat (created by S. Batiuk).

of the Iron Age community that erected them. Although a definitive answer to the question of their cultural origin(s) must await further excavation, as I have noted, the existing evidence points to at least two distinct phases of use. Since I have detailed my arguments elsewhere (Harrison in press), I will only summarize the relevant points here. In short, the Tayinat temples exhibit the characteristics of a religious architectural tradition, the temple *in antis*, indigenous to West Syria and the Levant, with antecedents that can be traced back to the third millennium BCE, though not to be confused with the *migdal*-type common in the second millennium BCE, or its often (wrongly) assumed correlate the Aegean *megaron*. The salient feature of the *anten* temples were their distinctive columned-porch entryways, or *façades*, and flanking *antae*, the projecting, or pilastered, ends of the lateral walls that framed the long central room of the building. Access to the central room was restricted by two large piers, or dividing walls, with the cultic sanctum, or *adytum*, centered at the back of the room, often further secluded by a second internal dividing wall (see convenient summary in Mazzoni 2010). The construction methods employed, in particular the ‘wood-crib’ technique, but also the almost identical size, shape and design of the basalt column bases in Temple XVI and Building I, clearly link the temples architecturally to the adjacent *bīt hilāni* palaces, and mark them as an integral, though subsidiary, component of the Second Building Period complex (fig. 6). The associated Hieroglyphic Luwian fragments provide further confirmation that they were constructed sometime in the 9<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE.

Nevertheless, the architectural renovations (e.g., the mud brick surfaces and elevated podium) and artifacts associated with their terminal phase of use, most notably the cache of Late Assyrian cuneiform tablets found in Temple XVI, indicate that both temples also formed part of an Assyrian religious complex. It would appear, thus, that at some point in the late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE both buildings were renovated and incorporated into an Assyrian religious complex, essentially a sacred precinct, possibly dedicated to the cult of Nabu, replicating a well-established Assyrian double temple tradition best exemplified by the perpendicularly arranged twin temples in the Ziggurat complex on the citadel at Khorsabad. In light of this, it is tempting to speculate that Platform XV, assigned by the

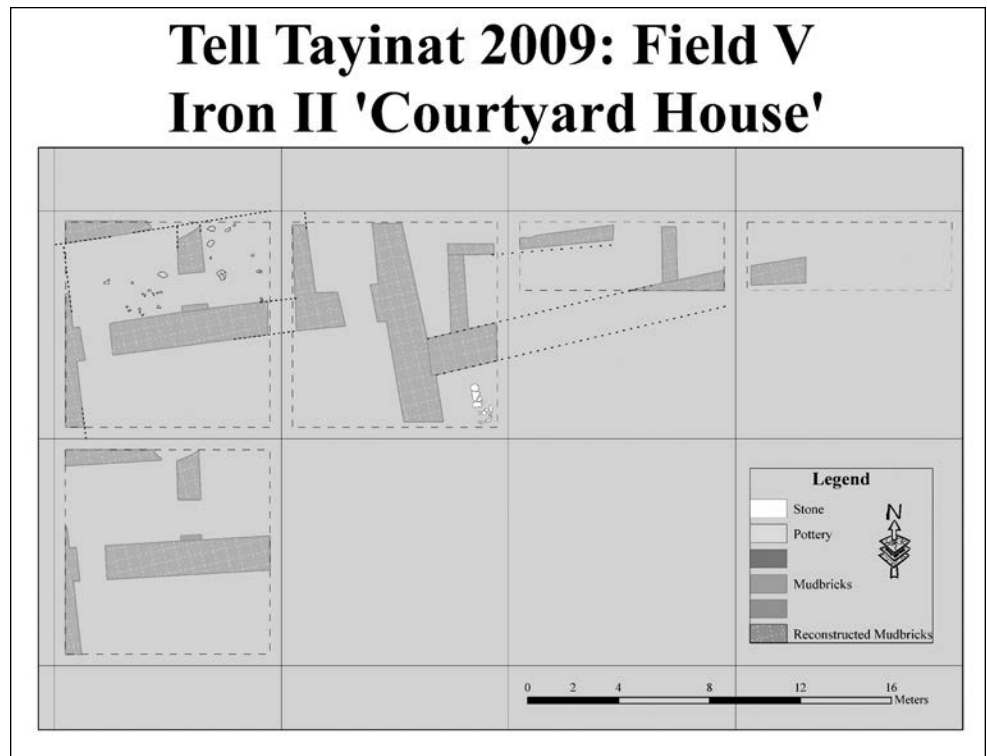


Figure 7. Plan of Field 5 (created by S. Batiuk).

Syrian-Hittite Expedition to this period, might have served as an elevated platform for an Assyrian cultic monument, perhaps even a small ziggurat-like structure, given its alignment immediately to the north of Temple XVI.

#### Field 5 Excavations

Excavations were initiated in 2008 along the east slope of the upper mound (see Fig. 2 in Welton, this issue), in an area designated Field 5, to investigate the archaeological sequence in a part of the site not explored by the Syrian-Hittite Expedition, particularly the Iron III (ca. 725–600 BCE) and later phases of Tayinat’s occupational history. Two 10 x 10 m squares (F5.98 and F5.99) were opened in 2008. The excavations were expanded to the south and east in 2009, and it is anticipated that additional squares will be opened in future seasons, both on the summit of the mound and as part of a step trench down the eastern slope, stratigraphically linking the upper and lower mounds of the site.

Thus far, the Field 5 excavations have revealed part of a large structure, possibly the remains of a Late Assyrian courtyard-style building (fig. 7). The excavated remains consist of three small rooms that flank the north side of a larger room, possibly an internal courtyard of the building. The building’s walls 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 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 northern and western extensions of the complex remain unexcavated.

The pottery recovered from the floors of the building's rooms included Cypro-Geometric and Cypro-Phoenician imports, Black on Red Ware, and a few fragments of Assyrian Palace Ware, as well as large quantities of Red Slipped Burnished Ware and local coarse wares typically dated to the late 8<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. A large clay rim fragment, found in one of the northern side rooms, may have formed part of an Assyrian-style ceramic 'bathtub'. The associated small finds included several stamp seals and clay bullae, suggesting an administrative function for the complex.

### Conclusion

The Assyrian empire achieved its mature form and organization in the latter decades of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, following Tiglath-pileser III's ascent to the throne. In contrast to his predecessors, who had maintained a foreign policy that consisted primarily of periodic military campaigns and the extraction of annual tribute from vassals, Tiglath-pileser embarked on a strategy of total conquest. The rulers of subjugated regions were deposed, their populations subjected to mass deportations, and their conquered lands reorganized as provinces ruled directly by Assyria. To accommodate the rapid territorial expansion that ensued, Tiglath-pileser appears to have instituted a series of political 'reforms', including an extensive reorganization of the Assyrian provincial administration (see further in Harrison 2005).

The 738 campaign against the Kingdom of Unqi, and its aftermath, bears the unmistakable imprint of this political strategy and the administrative changes Tiglath-pileser implemented to achieve it. As a result, the archaeological remains preserved at Tayinat offer an invaluable glimpse into the imperial administrative apparatus he and his successors installed. They reveal a remarkably sophisticated use of the material form to construct a visual 'landscape of power' that both manifested and reinforced the political ideology of the Assyrian imperial program. As we have seen, this included the construction of standardized palatial and religious architecture, large-scale representational art forms such as wall reliefs and sculpture, and the exploitation of elite craft industries such as ceramic fine ware production. Moreover, the utilization of these media was not haphazard, but carefully calibrated to maximize their affect on their intended audiences. As Lauinger notes in his assessment of the cuneiform tablets from Temple XVI, this extended to the written form as well, with these remarkable documents clearly

intended as display objects within the inner sanctum of the temple. Thus, in effect, the double temple complex, or 'sacred precinct', at Tayinat functioned as a stage for displaying and enacting the rituals and theatre of divine sanction, with the oath-tablet serving as both a written and visual reminder of the community's sworn loyalty to the Assyrian king, the divinely appointed ruler of the world.

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## NOTES

1. For a more detailed account of these events, see Hawkins 1982: 410–11; Weippert 1982: 395–96; Grayson 1991a: 74–76.
2. For the precise references, see Tadmor 1994: Ann. 25: 3–12; see also Summ. Insc. 6: 20–21; 9: 26–27.
3. Tadmor 1994: Ann. 13\*: 4–5.
4. Hawkins 1982: 425; 1983; Millard 1994: 51.
5. See further in Grayson 1991b: 216–19, text A.0.101.1, col. iii, lines 55–92a; Harrison 2001.
6. Pucci has combined the Third and Fourth Building Periods in her Period III, but agrees with their attribution to the Assyrian occupation (2008: 142); see also the further stratigraphic discussion in Snow (forthcoming).