

Neo-Hittites in the North Orontes Valley: Recent Investigations at Tell Ta'yinat

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Abstract:

Scholars have long assumed that the Neo-Hittite states of the Iron Age were linked culturally and linguistically to their Bronze Age Anatolian forebears. Until recently, however, only the 'Great Kings' of Carchemish have produced a dynastic line that actually bridges the intervening 'Dark Age' of the Iron I period (ca. 1200–900 BCE), while the archaeological record has been largely devoid of well-excavated cultural sequences for this period. The recent discovery of the Taitas Inscription on the Aleppo Citadel has now presented the possibility of tracing the historical development of a second such state, associated with the 'Land of Padasatini', as recently proposed by J.D. Hawkins. Drawing on the results of the ongoing excavations at Tell Ta'yinat, the site of ancient Kunulua, capital of the Neo-Hittite Kingdom of Patina/Unqi, this paper reviews the archaeological evidence for the foundation of an Early Iron Age Neo-Hittite kingdom centered in the Amuq Plain region of southeastern Turkey.

Résumé :

Des chercheurs ont depuis longtemps assumé que les états néo-hittites de l'âge du Fer étaient culturellement et linguistiquement liés à leurs prédécesseurs de l'âge du Bronze anatolien. Jusqu'à tout récemment, cependant, seuls les "Grands Rois" de Carchemish avaient produit une lignée dynastique qui faisait le pont avec la période des « siècles obscurs » du Fer I (ca. 1200–900 av. J.-C.), tandis que l'archéologie n'est pas encore parvenue à fournir une séquence culturelle bien stratifiée pour cette période. La récente découverte de l'inscription de Taitas à la citadelle d'Alep nous offre maintenant la possibilité de retracer le développement historique d'un second état semblable, associé au 'Territoire de Padasatini', tel que récemment proposé par J.D. Hawkins. Tirant profit des résultats de la fouille en cours de Tell Ta'yinat, le site de l'ancienne Kunulua, capitale du royaume néo-hittite de Patina/Unqi, cet article passe en revue les indices archéologiques militant en faveur de la fondation d'un royaume néo-hittite au début de l'âge du Fer, situé au centre de la plaine de l'Amuq, au sud-est de la Turquie.

Introduction

Ongoing archaeological excavations, and a growing corpus of epigraphic discoveries, have begun to challenge the prevailing view of the Early Iron Age (ca. 1200–900 B.C.E.) as a period of prolonged political fragmentation and ethnic strife, or a 'Dark Age'. Coinciding with reports of widespread famine, large-scale migrations and population dislocation, most famously including the Sea Peoples and biblical Israelites, and the collapse of the centralized state bureaucracies responsible for the rich administrative and literary archives of the Late Bronze Age, this era has long been seen as one of profound, systemic cultural and historical disruption. Increasingly, however, the emerging picture is of a considerably more complex cultural and political landscape marked by both continuity and change.

The pace of discovery has been particularly pronounced in the Hittite realm, including the recent discovery (or reinterpretation) of important epigraphic finds that have begun to force

a rethinking of the Hittite Empire's political fortunes during its final stages, and in the aftermath of its collapse. While scholars have long assumed that the Neo-Hittite states of the first millennium B.C.E. were linked culturally and linguistically to their Bronze Age Anatolian forebears, thus far, only the 'Great Kings' of Karkamiš have produced a dynastic line that actually bridges the intervening era, while the archaeological record remains largely devoid of well-excavated cultural sequences for this period. However, the recent discovery of a Luwian hieroglyphic inscription on the Aleppo Citadel has now raised the prospect of tracing the historical development of another such state, the 'Land of Padasatini', centered in the North Orontes Valley, as recently proposed by J.D. Hawkins (2002).

Drawing on the results of the renewed excavations at Tell Ta'yinat, therefore, I will review the archaeological and epigraphic evidence for the foundation of a Neo-Hittite kingdom in the Amuq Plain region during this formative era. The evi-

dence points to the emergence of a powerful regional kingdom, essentially a 'rump' state, that survived the demise of the ruling Hittite dynasty in Hattuša, reasserting political control over the region following a brief interlude dominated by the presence of settlers with strong Aegean cultural associations.

Historical Context

The evidence for Hittite political and cultural continuity in the North Orontes Valley during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age transition must be understood within the context of the Hittite imperial expansion that occurred in the later stages of the Late Bronze Age (for a more thorough survey of this political history, see Harrison *in press*). Hittite imperial ambitions took a decisive turn in the mid-14th century with Šuppiluliuma I's seizure of the throne following the troubled reign of his father Tudhaliya III. After consolidating the Hittite heartland, Šuppiluliuma launched a series of devastating attacks against the powerful kingdom of Mitanni, eventually sacking its royal capital Waššukanni and installing a client ruler over a considerably diminished realm. With Mitanni eliminated as a regional rival, Šuppiluliuma turned his attention to the smaller dependent states of western Syria, quickly disposing of any remaining opposition from those who had maintained loyalty to Mitanni (Bryce 1998: 175–79; Kuhrt 1995: 306–8).

With the opposition neutralized, Šuppiluliuma moved to consolidate his Syrian conquests, imposing a series of binding treaties on the newly conquered kingdoms that resulted in a network of Hittite vassal states. Šuppiluliuma also took the unprecedented further step of placing the region under direct Hittite control, which he accomplished by installing two of his sons as viceroys at the strategically important centers of Aleppo and Karkamiš. Telipinu, the elder of the two brothers, was enthroned as 'King of the Lands of Aleppo', and anointed 'Great (or chief) Priest' of this important cult center, while his younger brother Piyassili was appointed ruler of the 'Lands of Karkamiš', assuming the Hurrian throne name Šarri-Kušuh (Bryce 1992; 1998: 203–4). Šuppiluliuma's actions clearly were designed to counter the growing threat of Egypt and Assyria, as well as manage the fluctuating loyalties of the local Syrian kingdoms. Since Aleppo and Karkamiš appear to have been the only kingdoms installed with non-local rulers following their conquests, his actions clearly also were part of a calculated attempt to integrate the region into an expanding empire (Bryce 1998: 195). Although Hittite control of northwest Syria was challenged periodically during the subsequent Empire period, the basic administrative structure created by Šuppiluliuma remained intact, including the dynastic lines established at Aleppo and Karkamiš by his two sons.

The final years of the Hittite Empire have become the focus of renewed scholarly attention in recent years, prompted in large part by a growing body of archaeological and epigraphic evidence that are forcing reconsideration of prevailing understandings of its demise (for a recent summary, see Hawkins 2002). In particular, it has become increasingly clear that a complex set of interrelated factors contributed to the

Hittite Empire's collapse, and that it was perhaps not quite as terminal as once thought. Indeed, the most striking development has been the growing evidence for political and cultural continuity in the post-Empire period. This has been best exemplified at the Hittite capital itself, where the results of recent investigations have cast doubt on the longstanding view that the final Late Bronze Age settlement was violently destroyed ca. 1200 B.C.E. (see further in Seeher 1998; 2001; Genz 2003; 2004).

Evidence of political and cultural continuity has also been forthcoming in the southeastern regions of the empire. In 1985, two seal impressions bearing the name of Kuzi-Tešub were discovered at Lidar Höyük. The impressions identified him as a king of Karkamiš and the son of Talmi-Tešub, the third viceroy to follow Šarri-Kušuh and a cousin and contemporary of Šuppiluliuma II, the final ruler of Hattuša, thus extending the line of viceroys at Karkamiš to a fifth generation (Sürenhagen 1986; see also Güterbock 1992; Bryce 1998: 384). Shortly thereafter, additional references to the same Kuzi-Tešub were recognized in the genealogies of two kings of Malatya (ancient Melid). The Malatya inscriptions identified Kuzi-Tešub as 'Great King' and 'Hero of Karkamiš', and linked him to a dynasty that ruled at Karkamiš during the later part of the Early Iron Age (Hawkins 1988: 99–102). Since Kuzi-Tešub appears to have been the first ruler at Karkamiš to claim the title of 'Great King', until then a privilege reserved only for the royal line at Hattuša, use of this epithet infers that his reign also coincided with the fall of Hattuša and the elevation of Karkamiš to full independence (Hawkins 1988; 2002: 147–48). These epigraphic discoveries thus provided the first concrete historical link bridging the gap between the fall of the Hittite Empire and the emergence of the Neo-Hittite states of northwest Syria in the early centuries of the first millennium B.C.E.

In addition, the Malatya inscriptions also attest to the existence of other, apparently secondary, ruling dynasties that were related to the dynasty at Karkamiš through marriage. Thus, as Hawkins has noted (1995; 2002: 148), another important implication of these inscriptions was their confirmation that a direct ancestral link existed between the royal dynasty at Hattuša and an as yet undetermined number of regional dynasties that emerged during this post-Empire period. In the case of the Melid dynasty, not all of the named rulers were identified as kings, and only one is referred to as a 'Hero'. However, all bore the title 'Country-Lord of the city of Malatya', which during the preceding Empire period appears to have been reserved for provincial governors or local magnates (Hawkins 1995: 74–76). As descendants of Kuzi-Tešub, therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the Malatya line was initially subordinate to Karkamiš, though there is nothing in the epigraphic evidence that indicates they necessarily remained so, which in any case seems unlikely, since later dynasts at Karkamiš also bore the same title (Hawkins 1995: 78–84).

The recent discovery of a temple dedicated to Tešub, the Hittite Storm God, on the Aleppo Citadel has now raised the

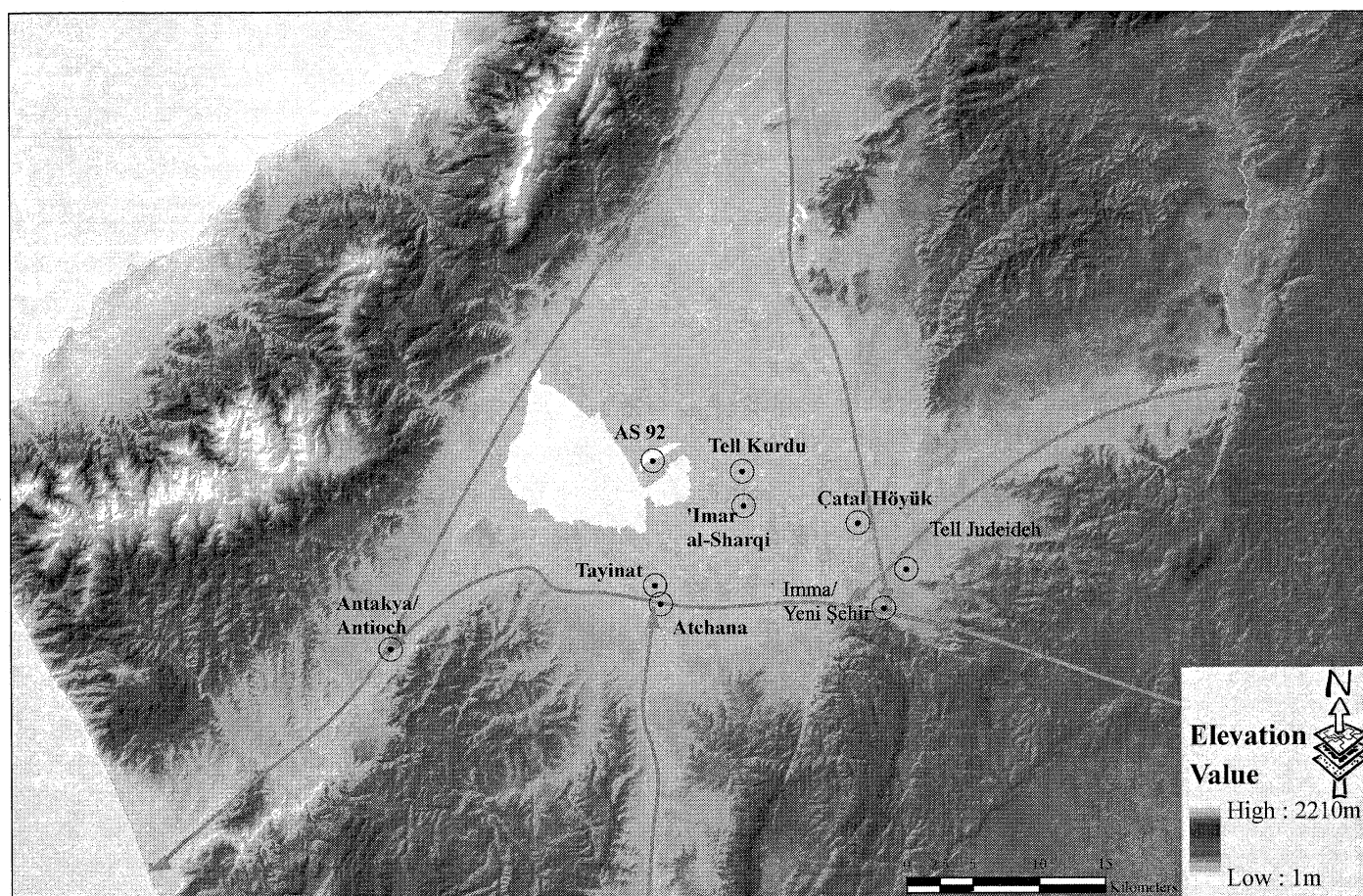


Figure 1. Map of the Amuq Plain showing the principal transportation routes (created by S. Batiuk).

prospect of delineating the political fortunes of another such Early Iron Age kingdom. Excavations on the Aleppo Citadel have uncovered the remains of a temple lined with carved orthostats strikingly similar, and probably contemporary, to the Early Iron Age temple at 'Ain Dara (see Orthmann 2002), and in 2003, an intact Luwian inscription dedicating the building to Tešub (for the preliminary reports, see Kohlmeyer 2000; and Gonnella, et al. 2005: 73-113).

Although a full publication of the Aleppo inscription has yet to appear (a photograph is provided in Gonnella, et al. 2005: Abb. 126), a number of observations with potentially significant historical implications have been made recently by J.D. Hawkins.¹ In particular, Hawkins has dated the inscription to ca. 1100 B.C.E., based on the paleography of the script and the iconography of the associated reliefs,² and he has drawn attention to the similarity between the name and title of its author, a certain Taitas, 'Hero and King of the land of Padasatini', and three previously known fragmentary Luwian inscriptions. Two of these inscriptions were found on stelae discovered out of context in the villages of Meharde and Sheizar, located near Qal'at al-Mudiq, northwest of Hama (for translations and commentary, see Hawkins 1979; 2000: 415-19), and concern Taitas' wife, Queen Kupapiyas. Both inscriptions refer to Taitas as 'Hero', but differ slightly in their reference to his realm, which they identify as

'Wadasatini' rather than 'Padasatini'. The third inscription was recovered, along with more than 80 other Luwian hieroglyphic fragments (see further below), during the excavations of the Syro-Hittite Expedition at Tell Ta'yinat in the North Orontes Valley.

Despite questions concerning their provenance and dating, as Hawkins has observed (2002: insert page; see also Gonnella, et al. 2005: 92), when taken together, these inscriptions infer the existence of an Early Iron Age kingdom known variously as Padasatini or Wadasatini, with its capital located at Tell Ta'yinat. Moreover, the wide area encompassed by these inscriptions suggests a kingdom of considerable power and influence, extending east to include Aleppo, and south at least as far as the Middle Orontes Valley region west of Hama. If we accept a twelfth century date for the Storm God Temple at Aleppo, this would render Taitas' kingdom more or less contemporary with the post-Empire Hittite dynasties based at Karkamiš and Melid, and raise the possibility that a third local dynasty survived the aftermath of the Hittite Empire's collapse.

As further support for this possibility, it is intriguing to note the striking correspondence between the apparent territorial extent of the Land of Padasatini/Wadasatini and the combined territories of the Late Bronze Age vassal kingdoms of Mukiš, Niya and Nuhašše (or Astour's confederation, see

1969), which together with Aleppo appear to have comprised the territory assigned by Šuppiluliuma to the kingdom of Aleppo during his administrative reorganization in the late 14th century. This also implies that a significant power shift occurred at some point in the twelfth century, with a ruling dynasty based in the Amuq Plain emerging and then eclipsing Aleppo as the dominant power in the region. In contrast to Aleppo, a variety of historical sources confirm that the Amuq region, or more properly, the Kingdom of Patina/Unqi,³ and its royal city Kunulua (almost certainly to be identified with Tell Ta'yinat), survived as an independent Neo-Hittite state until at least the latter part of the ninth century, and very possibly until the reign of Tiglath-pileser III in the eighth, though it did so within considerably diminished borders (see further in Harrison 2001).

Though fragmentary, the growing corpus of inscriptions that date to this formative 'Dark Age' thus point to a historical process marked by considerably more political continuity than previously thought. In the aftermath of the collapse of the imperial center at Hattuša, the viceroys installed at Karkamiš were left holding a much reduced 'rump' state that extended from Malatya southeast to the great bend of the Euphrates. In time, this entity fragmented further into the smaller kingdoms of Karkamiš, Melid and Kummuh, and to the west, Gurgum, and now also Padasatini. (Hawkins 2002: 148). The result was a mosaic of small regional kingdoms out of which would eventually emerge the better known Neo-Hittite states of the later Iron Age.

The Archaeology of Early Iron Age Ta'yinat

Tell Ta'yinat is situated on the northern bend of the Orontes River at the point where the river turns west and runs along the southwestern edge of the Amuq Plain (fig. 1). This vantage point placed the site strategically at the intersection of a series of important transit corridors that facilitated transport to and from the Anatolian highlands to the north, the Syro-Mesopotamian interior to the east, the Levantine littoral to the south, and the Mediterranean coast to the west. The site consists of an upper and lower mound (the latter now largely invisible below the alluvium of the plain), which together encompass an area of approximately 40 ha (fig. 2).

The Syro-Hittite Expedition Excavations

Large-scale excavations were conducted by the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute over the course of four field seasons between 1935 and 1938 as part of the Syro-Hittite Expedition. These excavations focused primarily on the West Central Area of the upper mound (visible as a dark shadow on the west side of the upper mound in fig. 2), 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 archaeological history of the site, see Batiuk et al. 2005). In all, the Chicago expedition achieved large horizontal exposures of five distinct architectural phases, or Building Periods, which they assigned to the Iron II and III periods (or Amuq Phase O, ca. 900–550

B.C.E) (Haines 1971: 64–66). A series of isolated soundings below the earliest Phase O floors encountered remains that were dated primarily to the third millennium B.C.E (specifically Phases H, I and J) (Braidwood and Braidwood 1960: 13–14), suggesting a lengthy period of abandonment between the final Early Bronze Age settlement and the first Iron II settlement.

According to the Chicago excavators, Building I, the most famous of Ta'yinat's *bit hilani* palaces, and the adjacent *megaron*-style temple (Building II) were constructed during the Second Building Period, the beginning of which they dated to the end of the ninth century B.C.E., based largely on the presence of the numerous Luwian hieroglyphic fragments that were found on or below their floors (Haines 1971: 66). Renovations to these buildings accounted for most of the activity assigned to the Third and Fourth Building Periods, which were dated to the latter part of the eighth and the seven centuries B.C.E., although stratigraphic links to the artifactual sequence remain tenuous (for more on this phase of Ta'yinat's settlement history, see Harrison 2005). In addition to Buildings I and II, the Second Building Period also included Buildings IV (a second *bit hilani*) and VI, and altogether formed part of a large complex arranged around a paved central courtyard (Courtyard VIII). The Second Building Period complex was the most extensive and best preserved architectural phase uncovered by the Chicago expedition in the West Central Area. It also exhibited clear stratigraphic separation from earlier, more fragmentary architectural remains encountered by the Chicago team, which they loosely assigned to their First Building Period.

Limited exposures of two large structures, identified as Buildings XIII and XIV by the Chicago expedition, were achieved beneath the floors and walls of several Second Building Period structures. The east part of Building XIII extended under Building IV, while Building XIV was sealed by Buildings I and VI, and the southern portion of IV. Since they represented the earliest Iron Age architectural levels encountered in the West Central Area, both buildings were assigned to the First Building Period (Haines 1971: 64). As

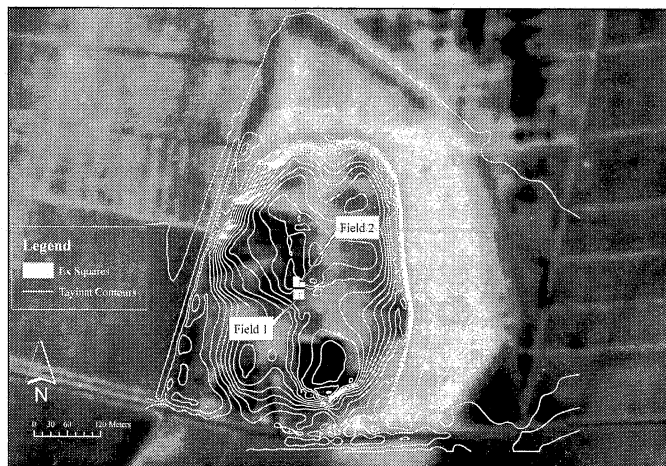


Figure 2. Contour map of Tell Ta'yinat overlaid on a Corona satellite image of the site (created by S. Batiuk).

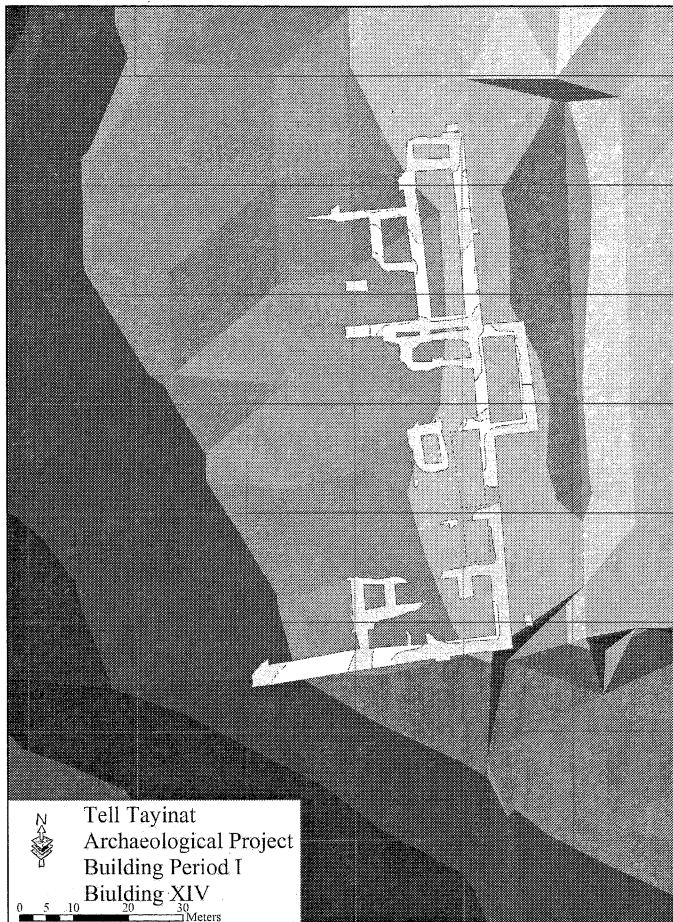


Figure 3. Plan of the Building XIV remains excavated by the Syro-Hittite Expedition (created by S. Batiuk).

with the Second Building Period, both structures appeared to form part of a larger complex that was also oriented around a central courtyard. Fragmentary remains uncovered below Second Building Period levels elsewhere on the upper mound were also tentatively assigned to the First Building Period.

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

Though poorly preserved, and only partially excavated, Building XIV appears to have been considerably larger than Building XIII. As with Building XIII, very little of its super-

structure was found intact, and the excavators therefore were unable to reconstruct a composite plan of the complex, nor establish its function (Haines 1971: 39–40). However, they did succeed in piecing together a fragmentary plan of the architecture they encountered that gives some indication of its enormous size (see Haines 1971: Pl. 95), which the excavators estimate to have been at least 49 X 95 m (see fig. 3).

Luwian Hieroglyphic Inscriptions

The Syro-Hittite Expedition also uncovered important artifactual remains which they assigned loosely to the First Building Period, including a substantial number of fragmentary Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions. While there has been some debate regarding the provenance of this material (a total of almost 90 fragments are reported), the Expedition's field records clearly indicate that these epigraphic remains were recovered from a wide range of secondary and tertiary contexts associated with the Second Building Period, including construction fill (Harrison 2001: 127–28). The production of these inscriptions, in other words, predated the Second Building Period, and therefore should be assigned to the preceding First Building Period, or to an as yet unexcavated earlier phase. Significantly, the corpus includes several fragments that appear to have belonged to a single monumental inscription, referred to as Tell Tayinat Inscription I (see Gelb 1939: 39; Hawkins 2000: 365–67), which makes reference to an individual named Halparuntiyas, apparently a ruler of the 'Land of Wadasatini' (for more on this inscription, and its potential historical significance, see Harrison in press).

Column Bases

In addition to the Luwian hieroglyphic fragments, a number of isolated architectural finds appear also to belong to the First Building Period, and add further to the scale and grandeur of this early phase. In particular, at least two similarly carved basalt column bases, ranging in diameter between 1.3 to 1.4 m, were recovered from contexts that suggest they originally belonged to either Buildings XIII or XIV. One was found on the surface of the mound (see Haines 1971: 37; Pls. 68D and 116B), while the second was found (apparently in reuse) in the paving of Courtyard VIII, directly above the porch entrance to Building XIII (Haines 1971: 39; depicted in the northeast corner of Square F-17 in Pl. 99). Two additional column bases were uncovered in a sounding (T 9) excavated beneath the pavement of Courtyard VIII in the area of Squares H-J 17–18 (see Haines 1971: 41; Pl. 89A and 98B). However, it is unclear whether the larger of the two is different from the one described earlier by Haines as a surface find. In any case, the latter piece was found resting, out of position, on top of a wall attributed to Building XIV (see Haines 1971: Pl. 95). Although of uncertain provenance, these column bases clearly predate the Second (and Third) Building Period structures they were recovered from, while their simple architectural style anticipates the smaller, more elaborately carved column bases found *in situ* in the entrance to Building I (cf. Haines 1971: Pls. 78C-D, 103 and 116A).

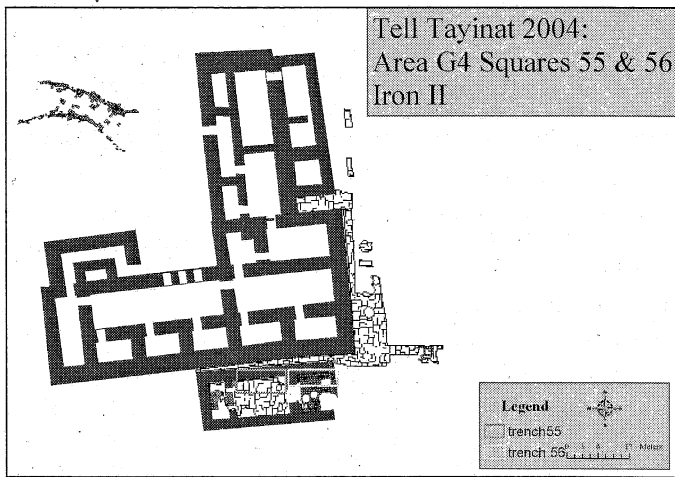


Figure 4. Plan of the 2004 excavation trenches in relation to Buildings I and II (created by S. Batiuk).

Carved Basalt Orthostats

Two carved lion-headed orthostats were also recovered during the Chicago excavations.⁴ The first (T-3269) was found in secondary reuse in the north wall of Building IV (Haines 1971: 42, Pls. 71B and 97), in a context associated with the building's second phase of occupation (specifically Floor 1, or the Third Building Period, according to the Haines phasing sequence; see 1971: 65). The principal features of the lion's head are clearly depicted, including its eyes, nose, slightly opened mouth with teeth and five whiskers. Its head is turned 90 degrees to the right, indicating that the figure probably once guarded the left side of an entranceway. The second lion-headed orthostat (T-3270) was also found out of context on Floor 3 in Room A, the stairwell for Building I, a context dated by the excavators to the Second Building Period (see Haines 1971: 65). This second lion figure exhibits stylistic features strikingly similar to the first, but also differs slightly, maintaining a forward-looking pose and roughly carved paws for a base. Both figures display characteristics typical of early Neo-Hittite sculpture, and almost certainly should be assigned to the First Building Period.⁵

A final architectural piece should also be considered, though its association with Tell Ta'yinat is not certain. The piece in question, a carved basalt orthostat depicting two charioteers driving over a defeated enemy rendered larger than life size, was first reported in 1896, and is said to have come from Tell Ta'yinat (Braidwood 1937: 33, fig. 7). Although usually dated to the eighth century by art historians (cf. Vieyra 1955: 46–47; Madhloom 1970: 31; Orthmann 1971: 83, 158–59), the chariot scene resembles similar reliefs found at Karkamiš (see Orthmann 1971: Pl. 24) and Zincirli (see Orthmann 1971: Pl. 57a) usually dated to the 10th or 9th centuries B.C.E., and contains specific features commonly associated with the ninth century or earlier, including the coiffure of the riders (pothook curls, hair bunched at the nape of the neck, and clean-shaven face), the presence of crossing arrow quivers on the side of the chariot, and a richly ornamented bar connecting the chariot to the horse. The eight-spoked wheel of the Ta'yinat chariot,

while generally considered typical of the eighth century B.C.E., does occur in ninth century contexts (cf. Ussishkin 1969: 128; Madhloom 1970: 14, Pl. I.3). Perhaps more significantly, thus far, the Second through Fifth Building Periods at Tayinat, in other words the eighth century B.C.E. and later, have not produced any other carved basalt orthostats, even though the Chicago excavations recovered numerous plain basalt orthostats from these levels.

The Tayinat Archaeological Project Investigations

The Tayinat Archaeological Project (TAP) was conceived within the framework of the Amuq Valley Regional Project (AVRP), which has been systematically documenting the archaeology of the Amuq Plain in southeastern Turkey since 1995. Within this broader regional research framework, TAP was initiated as a long-term field project, designed to fully and systematically document the archaeological record preserved at the site, clearly identified by the Syro-Hittite Expedition as one of the principal Bronze and Iron Age settlements in the plain. Following preliminary field seasons devoted to surveying and mapping the site (see further in Batiuk et al. 2005), targeted excavations were resumed at Tell Ta'yinat in 2004, and have continued on an annual basis since.

With the commencement of excavations in 2004, an exploratory probe was initiated along the southern edge of the West Central Area to test, or 'ground truth', remote sensing data gathered during the surface survey. These initial excavations, limited to a 3 X 20 m trench (see fig. 4), uncovered the northern wall and portions of the central room of Building II, the *megaron*-style temple first excavated by the Syro-Hittite Expedition. Building II, in turn, sealed a remarkably well-preserved sequence of Early Iron Age remains, including a wealth of pottery and other material culture exhibiting strong Aegean connections.⁶ During the following 2005 season, the 2004 probe was extended laterally to the south, expanding the excavated area to four 10 X 10 m squares, or a total area of

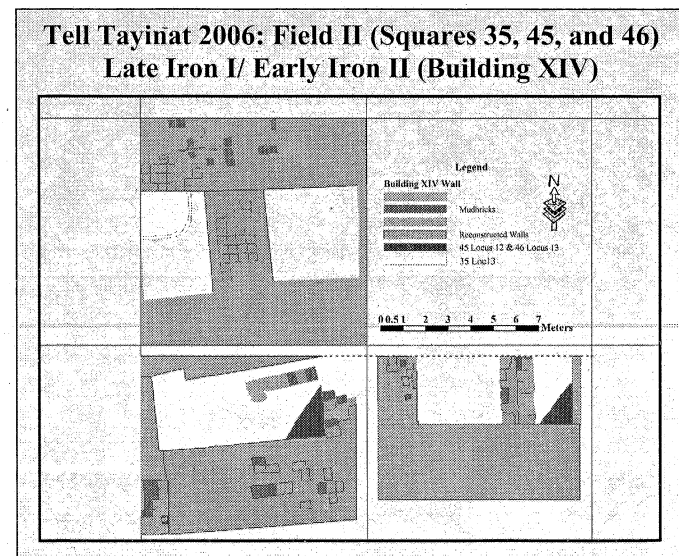


Figure 5. Plan of the Early Iron Age walls in Field II (created by S. Batiuk).

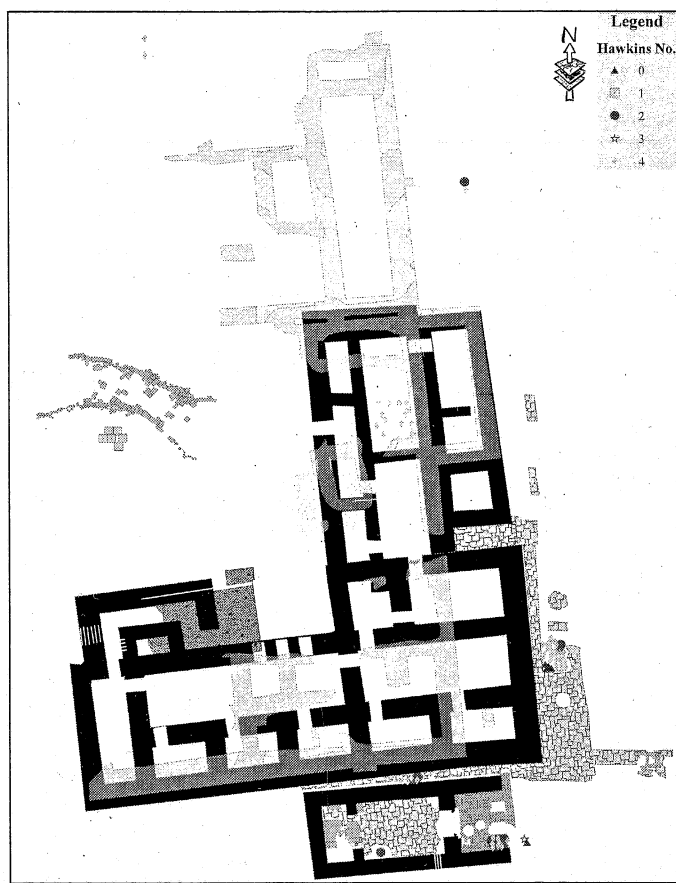


Figure 6. The spatial distribution of Luwian hieroglyphic fragments in the West Central Area (created by S. Batiuk).

400 sq m. In 2006, excavations continued in all four of these squares. To date, the excavations in Field I have succeeded in delineating seven superimposed architectural phases, or Field Phases (FP), with the primary sequence (FPs 3-6) dating to the twelfth century B.C.E. or the Early Iron I period.

The 2005 season also saw the opening of a new area, Field II, to the north of Field I in the vicinity of Building I (see fig. 2), the principal *bit hilani* palace uncovered during the Chicago excavations. The primary objectives of the excavations in this area were to determine what remained of Building I, and then excavate below it into Building XIV to better establish the stratigraphic relationship between these two structures. 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. In 2006, two additional 10 X 10 m squares were opened in Field II, extending the excavations to the south and linking them with Field I. The 2006 excavations also revealed a series of substantial walls which, together with the 2005 remains, appear to form part of a single monumental structure (see fig. 5). The walls average more than 3 m in width, and form a tight grid pattern of small rooms, none of which are equipped with a doorway. A probe in the southwest corner of the northern-most room was excavated to a depth of more than 3 m before reaching the bottom of the walls. Clearly the remains of an enormous structure, our excavations suggest that these walls very probably

formed part of the southeastern corner of Building XIV (see fig. 3). Preliminary analysis of the pottery and associated material culture points to a Late Iron I/Early Iron II date (ca. 10-early 9th centuries B.C.E.) for the complex.

The renewed TAP investigations have also begun to shed more light on the depositional history of the numerous Luwian hieroglyphic fragments recovered during the course of the Chicago excavations, in part due to the discovery of additional fragments with the resumption of excavations. These fragments, and very probably most, if not all, of the Chicago fragments appear to have eroded, or 'bled', from the unexcavated part of the mound immediately to the north of Building II; in other words, from the cultural stratum that has now begun to reveal the remains of Building XIV. When these fragments are plotted spatially, they cluster tightly around Building XIV (see fig. 6).

The extraordinary size of the walls in Field II, and the rich epigraphic record concentrated in this area, certainly marks Building XIV as an important structure. Although further excavations and analysis are certainly needed (and are indeed planned), its apparent date and relative stratigraphic position within the Early Iron Age sequence at Tell Ta'yinat also raises the possibility that Building XIV was the palatial residence of the kings of Padasatini or Wadasatini.

Summary Observations

So where does this leave us? Our investigations at Tell Ta'yinat have only just begun, and there certainly remain many more questions than we currently have answers for. Nevertheless, while it is clear that the collapse of the Hittite Empire at the end of the Late Bronze Age created a political vacuum that fostered an era of prolonged regional instability, as we have seen, there is also growing evidence of cultural and political continuity. In key centers of Hittite power, such as at Karkamiš, Hittite imperial control appears to have survived in the form of diminished 'rump' states ruled by dynastic lines with direct ancestral links to the royal family in Hattuša (see fig. 7). Interspersed between these reduced

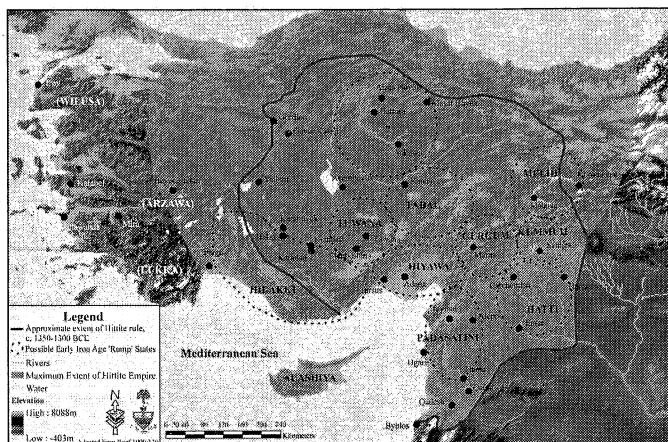


Figure 7. Map of the territorial extent of the Hittite Empire, and the approximate boundaries of the Early Iron Age 'rump' states that survived its collapse (created by S. Batiuk; adapted from Roaf 1990: 139).

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

In the North Orontes Valley, the existing archaeological evidence supports this view of continuity and change. Survey data indicate significant levels of settlement continuity during the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age (for more on these settlement trends, see Harrison in press; also Pruss 2002). At the same time, there is also evidence of change, attested perhaps most revealingly in the shift of the primary settlement in the valley from Tell Atchana (ancient Alalakh) to nearby Tell Ta'yinat. Whether the terminal Late Bronze Age settlement at Alalakh was destroyed or abandoned remains unclear, but the renewed excavations at Ta'yinat have now demonstrated conclusively that the site was resettled in the Early Iron I (or early 12th century B.C.E.), after an eight-century hiatus corresponding to the period of Alalakh's ascendancy. Somewhat unexpectedly, however, the Early Iron I levels at Ta'yinat have also revealed a material cultural signature that betrays an intrusive Aegean influence, if not direct evidence of the presence of foreign settlers. Superimposed over these distinctive remains, in turn, are the monumental structures of the First Building Period, with their Hittite stylistic features and rich Luwian epigraphic record, followed by the late 9th–8th century *bit hilani* complex of the Second Building Period.

Thus, although the specific historical circumstances remain elusive, the emerging archaeological picture, informed by an admittedly small but growing corpus of inscriptions, points to the emergence of a powerful regional kingdom, the Land of Padasatini/Wadasatini, ruled in the aftermath of the Hittite Empire's collapse by a line of kings with Hittite names, and very possibly with direct ancestral links to the royal dynasty. Centered at Tell Ta'yinat, the wealth of this hypothesized Early Iron Age kingdom are reflected in the impressive buildings and standing monuments of the First Building Period.

Acknowledgements

The Tayinat Archaeological Project has received research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP), for which we are deeply grateful. I wish also to thank the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums of Turkey, which has graciously awarded the research permits necessary to conduct each of our excavation seasons, the landowners who have generously permitted us to work on their land, and our project staff, whose dedicated efforts have ensured the successful results of each field season.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 His preliminary observations about the inscription first appeared in a post-publication insert to his 2002 article, and were then presented in papers delivered at the 4th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ICAANE) in Berlin (2004), and at a symposium commemorating the opening of the Syro-Anatolian Gallery at the Oriental Institute Museum in Chicago (2005).
 - 2 It should be noted, however, that while the inscription and reliefs may in fact be contemporary, the published photograph (Gonnella et al. 2005: Abb. 126) depicts the inscription clearly encroaching on to the adjacent relief, and therefore at least conceivably might have been applied at a significantly later date.
 - 3 The etymological similarity between Padasatini/Wadasatini and Patina (p>b>w, with a dropping of the intervocalic –ds/ts) has been noted by Yamada (2000: 96, n. 71), and more recently by Hawkins (2004), and further corroborates the historical link between the two kingdoms.
 - 4 This discussion of the Ta'yinat orthostats has benefited from a study conducted by B. Janeway as part of a graduate seminar paper.
 - 5 Mazzoni has also dated the second lion figure (T-3270) to the Early Iron Age, and has used it as evidence to argue for an 11th–10th century B.C.E. date for the foundation of the Iron Age city (1994: 322, n. 20; 1995: 188, n. 45).
 - 6 The evidence of an intrusive cultural presence with strong Aegean overtones during the Early Iron Age also has important historical implications, and is the focus of a separate paper; see Janeway (in press).
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