EXPLORING THE *LONGUE DURÉE*

Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager

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19. LIFTING THE VEIL ON A "DARK AGE":
TAʿYINAT AND THE NORTH ORONTES VALLEY DURING THE EARLY IRON AGE

by Timothy P. Harrison

IT HAS become axiomatic that the collapse of the Egyptian and Hittite empires at the end of the thirteenth century B.C.E., and with them the collapse of the widely integrated economic and political networks that characterized the terminal phase of Bronze Age civilization in the eastern Mediterranean, ushered in a prolonged "Dark Age" in the region. Coinciding with reports of widespread famine and political conflict, largely precipitated (according to the conventional view) by the migratory incursions of the "Sea Peoples"—often portrayed as the "Vikings" of the ancient world—these events brought to an end the centralized state bureaucracies that had long held sway in the region, ending the rich literary traditions (and archives) they had created. The ensuing Dark Age, correspondingly, devolved into an era of political fragmentation and turbulence marked by chronic ethnic strife, yet out of which eventually emerged the small territorial "nation-states" of biblical fame in the early centuries of the first millennium B.C.E.

Increasingly, however, the results of ongoing archaeological investigations, and a growing corpus of epigraphic discoveries, have begun to challenge this established historical view. The emerging picture is of a considerably more complex political landscape marked by both continuity and change. The pace of discovery has been particularly significant in the Hittite realm, including the recovery (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. But a Luwian hieroglyphic inscription recently discovered on the Aleppo Citadel has now raised the prospect of tracing the historical development of another such state, associated with the "Land of Palastin," as recently proposed by J. D. Hawkins (2008).

Drawing on the results of the renewed excavations at Tell Taʿyinat, the site of ancient Kunulua, capital of the historically attested ninth- and eighth-century Kingdom of Patina/Unqi, this paper will review the archaeological and epigraphic evidence for the foundation of a Neo-Hittite kingdom centered in the Amuq plain during this formative early Iron Age (ca. 1200–900 B.C.E.) period. The existing evidence points to the emergence of a powerful regional kingdom, essentially a "rump" state, and possibly an appanage kingdom, which 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. Though admittedly fragmentary and incomplete, this evidence is presented here with the aim of sketching a historical outline for a region of gathering research focus during this period of longstanding interest to Professor Stager.

Historical Context

The evidence for Hittite political and cultural continuity in northwest Syria during the Late Bronze–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. Hittite imperial ambitions took a decisive turn in the mid-fourteenth century with Šuppiluliuma I's seizure of the throne following the troubled reign of his father Tudhaliya III.[1] 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, including the kingdoms of Aleppo (Halab), Mukiš (Alalakh), Niya and Nuhašše. It took a subsequent campaign to subdue the Mitannian stronghold entrenched at Karkamiš, and a formal treaty with Niqmaddu II, consummated during a meeting between the two rulers at Alalakh, to secure Ugarit as a vassal (Bryce 1998:175–79; Kuhrt 1995:306–8).

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[1] For more thorough surveys of this political history, see Kuhrt (1995:250–66), Bryce (1998:158–205), and Klengel (1992:106–120; 1999).

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. However, 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" (lit. LUGAL) of "the lands of Aleppo," and also assigned the position of "Great (or Chief) Priest" for 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 and to manage the fluctuating loyalties and chronic instability of these local Syrian kingdoms. Since Aleppo and Karkamiš appear to have been the only kingdoms not to have had local rulers installed (compare Naʾaman 1980:38), their appointments also suggest a calculated attempt to integrate the region into an expanding empire and achieve a lasting *pax Hethitica* (Bryce 1998:195).

As Bryce has noted (1992:18; 1998:203–4), their vice-regal duties appear to have been coordinated, with political and military authority concentrated in the hands of the Karkamiš viceroys, and religious and judicial responsibilities handled by the viceroys in Aleppo, effectively replicating the primary duties of the "Great King of Hatti" himself. Although ultimate authority remained with the Great King throughout the Empire period, it is also clear that these viceroys enjoyed increasing autonomy and power, particularly the Karkamiš dynasty. Even before the end of Šuppiluliuma's reign, Šarri-Kušuh had emerged as the principal power broker in the region, as evidenced by his prominent role in securing the Hittite treaty with Šattiwaza (Bryce 1998:200–1).

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. A century later, for example, texts dating to the reign of Tudhaliya IV describe the role played by Šarri-Kušuh's grandson Ini-Tešub as viceroy at Karkamiš and the ruler responsible for north Syria, in the delicate arbitration of a difficult divorce between members of the ruling families of Amurru and Ugarit (Kuhrt 1995: 310–13). By simply adding an administrative tier, therefore, while leaving much of the existing political structure in place, Šuppiluliuma successfully integrated the region into an expanding Hittite imperial realm.

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 the Empire's demise.[2] While a synthesis may be premature, it nevertheless has become increasingly clear that a complex set of interrelated factors contributed to its collapse, and that this collapse was not precipitated by a single, decisive event. Nor was it perhaps 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.[3]

By the end of the thirteenth century, the imperial administrative structure installed by Šuppiluliuma more than a century before had begun to fragment. In particular, the appanage kingdoms he and his successors had established had become increasingly independent, exercising their autonomy to leverage political concessions (and of course power) from a steadily weakening center. Most notable of these were the kingdoms of Tarhuntašša (see Singer 1996; Dinçol et al. 2000) and Karkamiš. In the case of Karkamiš, as we have seen, considerable power had already been transferred during Šuppiluliuma's reign, when his vice-regal son Šarri-Kušuh was given responsibility for virtually all of Hittite-controlled territory in Syria. Šarri-Kušuh was succeeded by a line of progressively more powerful and independent viceroys, with Ini-Tešub apparently one of the more active, and they eventually grew to rival their cousins on the throne at Hattuša.

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 gene-

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[2] For diverging views on this subject, see Hoffner 1992, Muhly 1992, Drews 1993, Yakar 1993, Singer 2000, and Hawkins 2002.

[3] Although beyond the focus of this paper, the results of recent investigations at Boğazköy, for example, have begun to cast doubt on the longstanding view that the final LB settlement at Hattuša was violently destroyed ca. 1200 B.C.E. See further in Seeher 1998; 2001; and Genz 2003; 2004.

alogies 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 implies 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 have thus provided the first concrete link bridging the historical gap between the fall of the Hittite Empire, and with it the end of the scribal tradition responsible for the cuneiform tablets preserved in the Hittite archives at Hattuša, and the emergence of the Neo-Hittite states of northwest Syria in the early centuries of the first millennium B.C.E.

However, 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 is 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, but there is nothing in the epigraphic evidence that indicates it necessarily remained so, which in any case seems unlikely, because 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 prospect of delineating the political fortunes of another such early Iron Age kingdom. Given Aleppo's prominence as a religious center, and its close association with the Storm God in particular, this important discovery should perhaps have come as no surprise. Indeed, there had been prior hints that such an edifice existed. For example, a fragmentary Luwian inscription, first reported in the late nineteenth century and still visible in the wall of an Aleppo mosque (see Gonnella et al. 2005:Abb. 8).

commemorates the construction of a temple to Hebat and Šarruma by Talmi-Šarruma, Telipinu's son and successor as king of Aleppo (Laroche 1956; Hawkins 2000:388). Additionally, in a brief article published in 1995, M. van Loon drew attention to two orthostats found reused in the walls of the medieval citadel that bore a striking stylistic resemblance to orthostats from the early Iron Age temple at ᶜAin Dara, and proposed (rather perceptively, as it turned out) that they might in fact have come from the elusive temple (1995:184). The Aleppo Citadel excavations have since provided confirmation, uncovering the walls of a temple lined with similarly carved orthostats, which very likely is contemporary to the ᶜAin Dara temple (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, who has undertaken its translation and publication.[4] In particular, Hawkins has dated the inscription to ca. 1100–1000 B.C.E., based on the paleography of the script and the iconography of the associated reliefs,[5] 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 Palastin," and three previously known fragmentary Luwian inscriptions (Hawkins 2004; 2008; Gonnella et al. 2005:92). Two of these inscriptions were found on stelae discovered out of context in the villages of Meharde and Sheizar, located near Qalᶜat al-Mudiq, northwest of Hama (for translations and commentary, see Hawkins 1979; 2000:415–19), and concern a Queen Kupapiyas, "wife of Taitas." Both inscriptions refer to Taitas as

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[4] 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 Fourth International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ICAANE) in Berlin in 2004, and at a symposium celebrating the opening of the Syro-Anatolian Gallery at the Oriental Institute Museum in Chicago in 2005. Most recently, at the Sixth ICAANE meetings in Rome, held May 5–10, 2008, Hawkins announced the discovery of a fragmentary second inscription, and proposed that the territorial reference made in the Aleppo inscriptions be read "Palastin" and linked to the Peleset of Sea Peoples fame.

[5] However, it should be noted that the inscription encroaches onto the adjacent relief (see photograph in Gonnella et al. 2005:Abb. 126), and therefore conceivably might have been applied at a later date.

"Hero" but identify his kingdom as "Walastin," rather than Palastin, as in the Aleppo inscription.

The third inscription was recovered during the excavations of the Syro-Hittite Expedition at Tell Taᶜyinat (specifically Tell Taᶜyinat Inscription 1; see Hawkins 2000:365–67) in the Plain of Antioch in the North Orontes Valley. However, the surviving hieroglyphic fragments do not actually mention Taitas, but instead refer to a second individual named Halparuntiyas, who also appears to have ruled "the land of Walastin." Hawkins, following Gelb (see 1939:39), has noted the similarity to Qalparunda, and has raised the possibility that he may be the same Patinean ruler said to have paid tribute to Shalmaneser III in 857 and 853 B.C.E. (Hawkins 2000:365–66; see further historical discussion in Harrison 2001:117–19).

Unfortunately, confusion regarding the precise stratigraphic context(s) of the six hieroglyphic fragments that comprise this inscription, as well as the more than 80 other Luwian hieroglyphic fragments recovered by the Syro-Hittite Expedition, has clouded discussion of their broader historical significance. Contrary to the assumption that the fragments of Taᶜyinat Inscription 1 formed part of a colossal seated figure destroyed during the 738 B.C.E. campaign of Tiglath-pileser III (first proposed by Gelb [1939:39]; but see in particular, Hawkins 2000:366), the Expedition's field records clearly indicate that these epigraphic remains were recovered in fragmentary condition from a wide range of secondary and tertiary contexts associated with the Second Building Period, including construction fill (Harrison 2001: 127–28).[6] The production of these inscriptions as part of intact monuments, in other words, predates at least the terminal phase of the Second Building Period, and probably should be assigned to the preceding First Building Period, described further below.

Regardless of their precise date, however, as Hawkins has observed (2004; 2008; see also Gonnella et al. 2005:92), the new Aleppo inscriptions, when taken together with the Meharde, Sheizar, and Taᶜyinat inscriptions, imply the existence of an early Iron Age kingdom known variously as Palastin or Walastin, with its capital possibly located at Tell Taᶜyinat in the North Orontes Valley. 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's 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 Hittite Empire's collapse.

As further support for this possibility, it is intriguing to note the striking similarity between the apparent territorial extent of the Land of Palastin/Walastin and the combined territories of the Late Bronze Age vassal kingdoms of Mukiš, Niya and Nuhašše (or Astour's "confederation"; see Astour 1969), together with Aleppo, and it is tempting to propose that this area also corresponded roughly to the territory assigned by Šuppiluliuma to the kingdom of Aleppo during his administrative reorganization in the late fourteenth century. Such a reconstruction, however, would also imply that a significant power shift had 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. Later historical developments do support this possibility. Although its political fortunes are obscured by a lack of direct historical evidence, Aleppo undoubtedly had lost its regional prominence well before the ninth century B.C.E., when the Aramean kingdom of Bit-Agusi, with its capital at nearby Arpad (Tell Rifaᶜat), 35 km north of Aleppo, emerged as the most powerful presence in the region (Hawkins 1975). In contrast to Aleppo, a variety of historical sources confirm that Palastin, or more properly, the kingdom of Patina/Unqi,[7] and its royal city Kunulua (almost certainly to be identified with Tell Taᶜyinat), 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 century, although 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" period thus point to a historical process marked by considerably greater 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 appears to have fragmented further into the smaller

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[6] It should also be pointed out that only Fragments 3, 4, and 5 of the inscription preserve actual joins. The "Walastin" reference occurs in Fragment 3, while Halparuntiyas is named in Fragment 6.

[7] The etymological similarity between Wadasatini (as originally read) and Patina (p>b>w, with a dropping of the intervocalic *–ds/ts*) was first noted by Yamada (2000:96, n. 71), and further strengthens the historical link between the two kingdoms.

kingdoms of Karkamiš, Melid, and Kummuh, and to the west, Gurgum, and now also Palastin. Still farther west, in southern Anatolia, early Iron Age polities also appear to have survived Tarhuntašša, which became known as Hilakku, and in the Cilician plain, where Kizzuwatna was supplanted by Hiyawa, while new polities appear to have been formed to the north in the Konya plain region, which became known as Tuwana, and in the region of Kayseri and Nevşehir, known in later times as Tabal (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 (see figure 1).
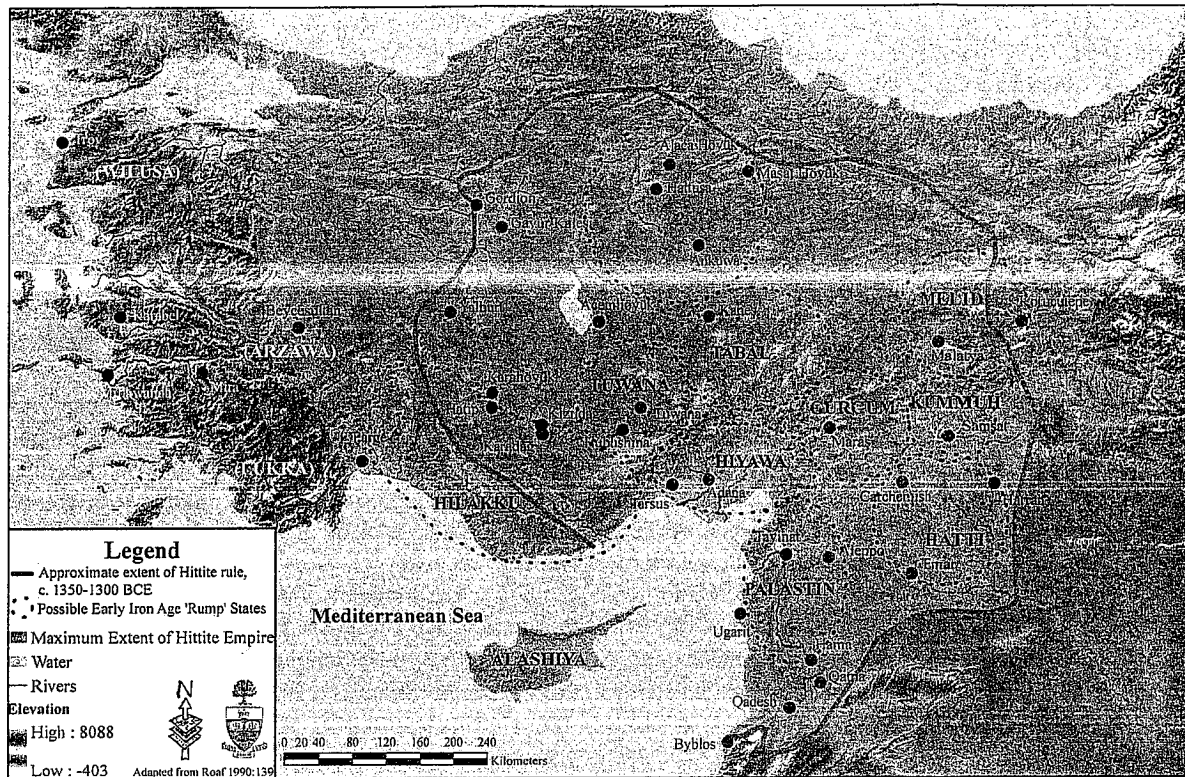

Figure 1. Map showing the extent of the Hittite Empire, with the approximate territorial boundaries of the early Iron Age "rump" states that survived its collapse
Created by S. Batiuk (adapted from Roaf 1990:139)

Settlement Trends in the North Orontes Valley

Survey data for the North Orontes Valley region indicate a relative decline in settlement during the Late Bronze Age that mirrors a general decline throughout the ancient Near East during this period (McClellan 1992; Yener et al. 2000:187–89). This trend was reversed during the Iron Age, when the number of sites in the region almost doubled. Closer examination of this survey data, however, elicits a number of more revealing patterns (for a more thorough treatment, see Harrison 2001:122–24). First, of the 30 LB (or Amuq Phase M) sites that have been identified by surface survey, 17 also preserved evidence of early Iron Age (Amuq Phase N) occupation, or almost two-thirds of the LB sites. suggesting significant settlement conti-nuity between the two periods. However, these 17 sites also account for only about one-third of the total number of recorded Amuq N sites. Fully 74 percent, or 30 of the 47 known Amuq N sites, were new settlements. Moreover, of these 17 sites, 14 were occupied during all three periods, and represented multi-period mounds with long occupational sequences. In contrast, the evidence for settlement continuity between the Iron 1 (Amuq N) and the later Iron II (Phase O) is very strong. 35 of the 47 known Amuq N sites, or a remarkable 75 percent, were also occupied in Phase O.[8]

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[8] For a similar assessment of the settlement trends in the Amuq, although based on slightly different survey data, see Pruss 2002:162–4.

Site-size data clarify further the apparent shift toward settlement intensification evident in the overall site totals. While aggregate settled area also increased, more revealing is the average size of the sites, which actually decreased from 4.76 ha in the LB (or Phase M) to 3.61 in Phase N and 3.63 ha in Phase O. As Casana and Wilkinson have noted (2005:39–40), the Amuq survey data document a decisive settlement shift, or more specifically, a "dispersal" of the population into small, rural settlements during the Iron Age. While site-size distributions remained relatively stable throughout the latter half of the second millennium (Phases M and N), with approximately one-third of the sites falling into the medium size category (5–15 ha) and two-thirds into the small size category (<5 ha), in Phase O, more than eighty percent of the sites (n=26) qualify as small settlements.

What these survey data fail to reveal, however, is the emergence of Tell Taᶜyinat as the dominant settlement in the region. By the Iron II period (or Phase O), at 35 ha in size Tell Taᶜyinat had grown to account for fully 30 percent of the known settled area, and was more than three times larger than Çatal Höyük (AS 167), the next largest settlement in the regional site-size hierarchy. The dominance of Tell Taᶜyinat is also reflected in the spatial distribution of Phase O sites, which shows a heavy concentration of settlements in its vicinity along the southern edge of the plain. Thus, while the survey data indicate significant settlement continuity during the transition from the Late Bronze to the early Iron Age, equally revealing is the evidence that this early Iron Age settlement network subsequently developed into an integrated, urbanized regional entity, with Tell Taᶜyinat at its center.

The Syro-Hittite Expedition Excavations

Today, Tell Taᶜyinat forms a large, low-lying mound 1.5 km east of the town of Demirköprü on the northern bend of the Orontes River, at the point where the river turns west and winds along the southwestern edge of the Amuq plain. The site consists of an upper and lower mound, with the upper mound visible just north of the modern Antakya–Reyhanlı road and the lower mound now hidden by alluvial accumulation from the annual flooding of the Orontes River. The combined surface area of the two mounds measures approximately 500 m (E–W) × 700 m (N–S).

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." The excava-tions 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 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 were assigned to the Iron II and III periods (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 Amuq 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.

In a preliminary study of the second and first millennium B.C.E. Amuq pottery sequence (Phases K through O), completed as part of a doctoral dissertation by Gustavus Swift, the Phase O sequence was further divided into four subphases labeled 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 fabric tradition during this period. Of particular significance, Swift (1958: 154–55) assigned sherds of imported Attic Geometric pottery to his Stage Oc (ca. 800–725 B.C.E.), and fragments of Corinthian, Attic Black Figure, and Assyrian Glazed and Palace wares to his Stage Od (ca. 725–550 B.C.E.).

According to the Chicago excavators, Building I, the most famous of Taᶜyinat's *bīt ḫilani* 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 seventh centuries B.C.E. Although the links to the artifactual sequence remain tenuous, it is clear that these later architectural phases correspond loosely to Swift's Stage Od (for more on this phase of the site's settlement history, see Harrison 2005). In addition to Buildings I and II, the Second Building Period also included Building IV (a second *bīt ḫilani*) and Building VI, and altogether formed part of a large complex arranged around a paved central court-

yard (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 the earlier, more fragmentary architectural remains encountered by the Chicago team and 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 the buildings assigned to the Second Building Period complex. 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 reached in the West Central Area, both buildings were assigned to the First Building Period (Haines 1971:64). As with the Second Building Period, both structures appeared to form part of a complex centered around a courtyard. A few 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 subfloor structural foundations of the building were found intact. Nevertheless, the general outline of Building XIII was reasonably clear, betraying the unmistakable characteristics of a *bīt ḫilani* (for the floor plan, see Haines 1971:pl. 94). The building was roughly rectangular in shape, measuring approximately 28 m (E–W) × 35 m (N–S), 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 superstructure was found intact, and the excavators therefore were unable to reconstruct a coherent plan of the complex or determine its function (Haines 1971:39–40). However, they did succeed in piecing together a fragmentary plan that gives some indication of its truly enormous size (see Haines 1971:pl. 95), which the excavators estimated to have been at least 49 m (E–W) × 95 m (N–S).

Miscellaneous Architectural Finds

In addition to the Luwian hieroglyphic fragments, a number of isolated architectural finds appear also to belong to the First Building Period and add to the sense of scale and grandeur of this early phase. In particular, as many as two similarly carved basalt column bases, ranging between 1.3 and 1.4 m in diameter, were recovered from contexts that suggest they originally had come from either Building 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 vicinity of the porch entrance to Building XIII (Haines 1971:39; see depiction in the northeast corner of Square F-17 in pl. 99). A possible third (and fourth) column base was 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 these two column bases 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 undoubtedly predate the Second (or Third) Building Period structures they were recovered from, while their simple architectural style anticipates the smaller, more elaborately rendered column bases found *in situ* in the entrance to Building I (compare with Haines 1971:pls. 78c–d, 103, and 116a).

Two carved lion-headed orthostats were also recovered during the Chicago excavations.[9] 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

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[9] My discussion of the Taᶜyinat orthostats has benefited from a study conducted by Brian Janeway as part of a graduate seminar paper.

the first, but also differs slightly with its forward-looking stance, and roughly carved paws for a base (see figure 2). Both figures display characteristics typical of early Neo-Hittite sculpture, and almost certainly should be assigned to the First Building Period.[10]
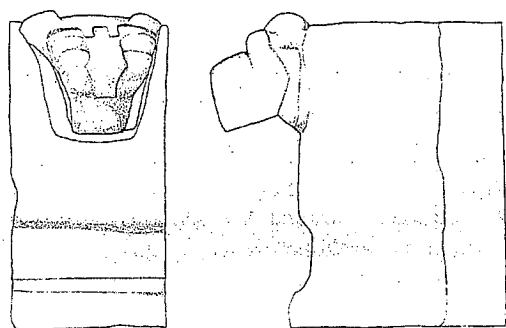

Figure 2. Lion-headed orthostat (T-3270) found reused in Building I at Tell Ta^cyinat

Drawing by F. Haughey

A final architectural piece should perhaps also be considered, though its association with Tell Ta^cyinat 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^cyinat (Braidwood 1937:33, fig. 7). Although usually dated to the eighth century by art historians (compare with Vieyra 1955:46–47; Madhloom 1970:31; Orthmann 1971:83, 158–59), the carved chariot scene does resemble similar reliefs found at Karkamiš (Orthmann 1971:pl. 24) and Zincirli (Orthmann 1971:pl. 57a) that are generally dated to the tenth or ninth centuries B.C.E., and it 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 the richly ornamented bar connecting the chariot to the horse. The eight-spoked wheel of the Ta^cyinat chariot, while generally considered typical of the eighth century B.C.E., does occur in ninth-century contexts (compare with Ussishkin 1969:128; Madhloom 1970:14, pl. I.3). Perhaps more significantly, if this orthostat is

assigned to the Second (or Third) Building Period, in other words, to the eighth century B.C.E. or later, it would be the only carved basalt orthostat recovered from these levels, in contrast to the numerous plain orthostats that were uncovered *in situ* by the Chicago excavations.

The Ta^cyinat Archaeological Project Investigations

The Ta^cyinat 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 document fully and systematically 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 Batiuk et al. 2005), targeted excavations were resumed at Tell Ta^cyinat in 2004 and have continued on an annual basis since then.

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 excavations, limited to a 3 × 20-m trench, 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.[11] During the following 2005 season, the 2004 probe was extended laterally to the south, expanding the excavated area to four 10 × 10-m squares, or a total area of 400 square meters. In all, the 2004 and 2005 excavations in this area, specifically Field I, succeeded in delineating seven superimposed architectural phases, or Field Phases (FP), with the primary sequence (FP 3–6) dating to the twelfth century B.C.E. or early Iron I.

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, the principal *bīt ḫilani* palace uncovered during the Chicago excavations. The primary objectives of the excavations in this area were to determine

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[10] Indeed, Mazzoni has used the second lion figure (T-3270) to argue for an eleventh–tenth-century B.C.E. date for the foundation of the Iron Age city (Mazzoni 1994:322, n. 20; 1995:188, n. 45).

[11] The evidence of an intrusive cultural presence with strong Aegean overtones during the early Iron Age certainly also has important historical implications and is the focus of another paper (see Janeway 2006–7).

what remained of Building I and then excavate below it into Building XIV to establish better the stratigraphic relationship between these two structures. The 2005 excavations, limited to a 10 × 10-m area, proceeded to uncover a series of large mudbrick walls immediately below the modern plow zone. The walls, which averaged more than 3 m in width, formed a tight grid pattern, resulting in two small rooms, neither of which was furnished with a doorway (see figure 3). The westernmost of the two rooms was also equipped with a circular bin-like installation. A probe in the southwestern corner of this room reached a depth of more than 3 m before encountering the bottom of the walls. Clearly the remains of an enormous structure, our excavations suggest that these walls very probably formed part of the foundations of Building XIV. Preliminary assessment of the pottery and associated material culture points to a late Iron I/early Iron II date (ca. tenth–early ninth 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 almost certainly most, if not all, of the Chicago fragments reported from this area, 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. To localize further the spatial distribution of these fragments, we have tried to plot their distribution across the site. If the fragments from Taᶜyinat Inscription 1 are reassigned to the Courtyard VIII area rather than to the colossal seated figure they were incorrectly attributed to in Gateway VII, all but two out of a total of 88 reported fragments were found in the West Central Area. Moreover, as illustrated in figure 4, the scatter plots created by their spatial distribution cluster tightly around Building XIV (outlined in light gray in the plan).
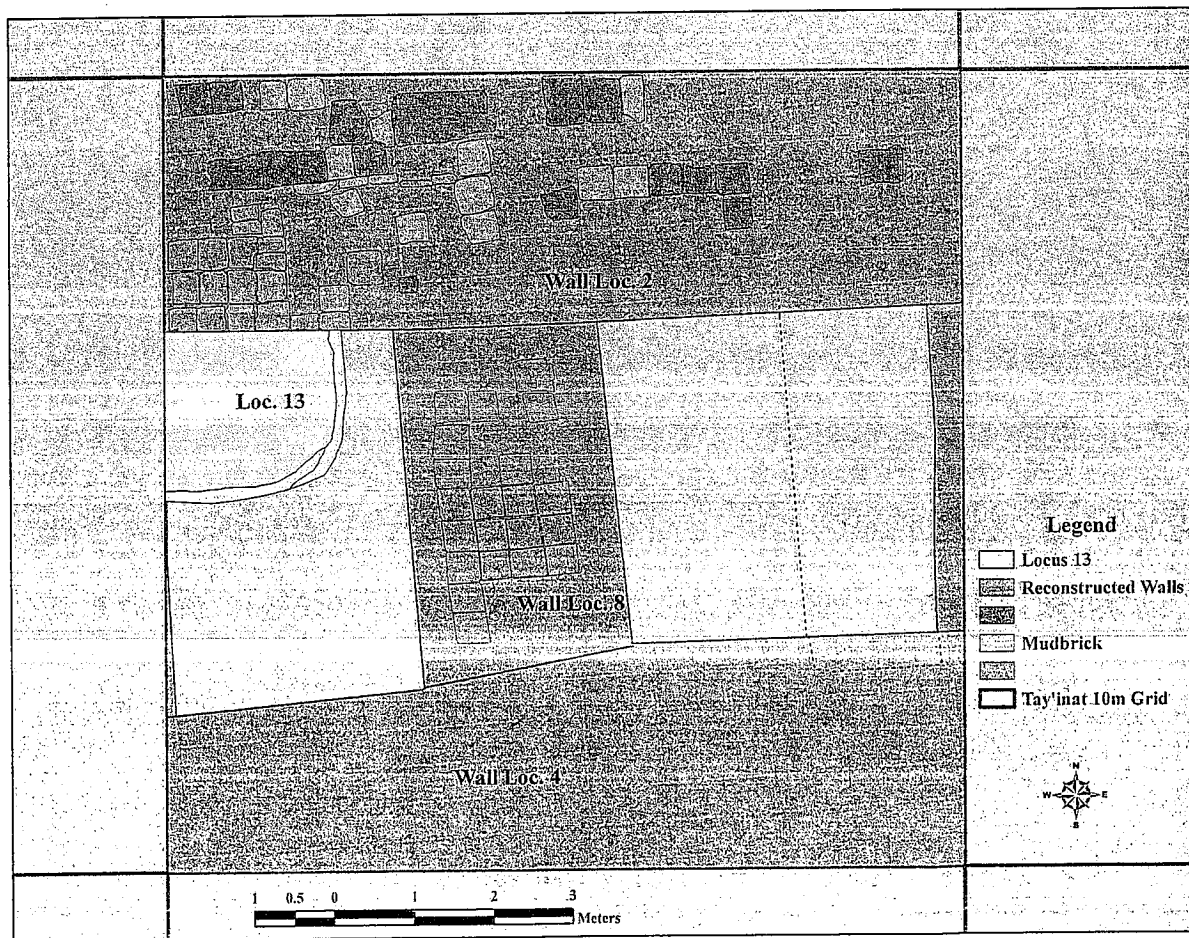

Figure 3. Plan of the early Iron Age walls in Field II at Tell Taᶜyinat
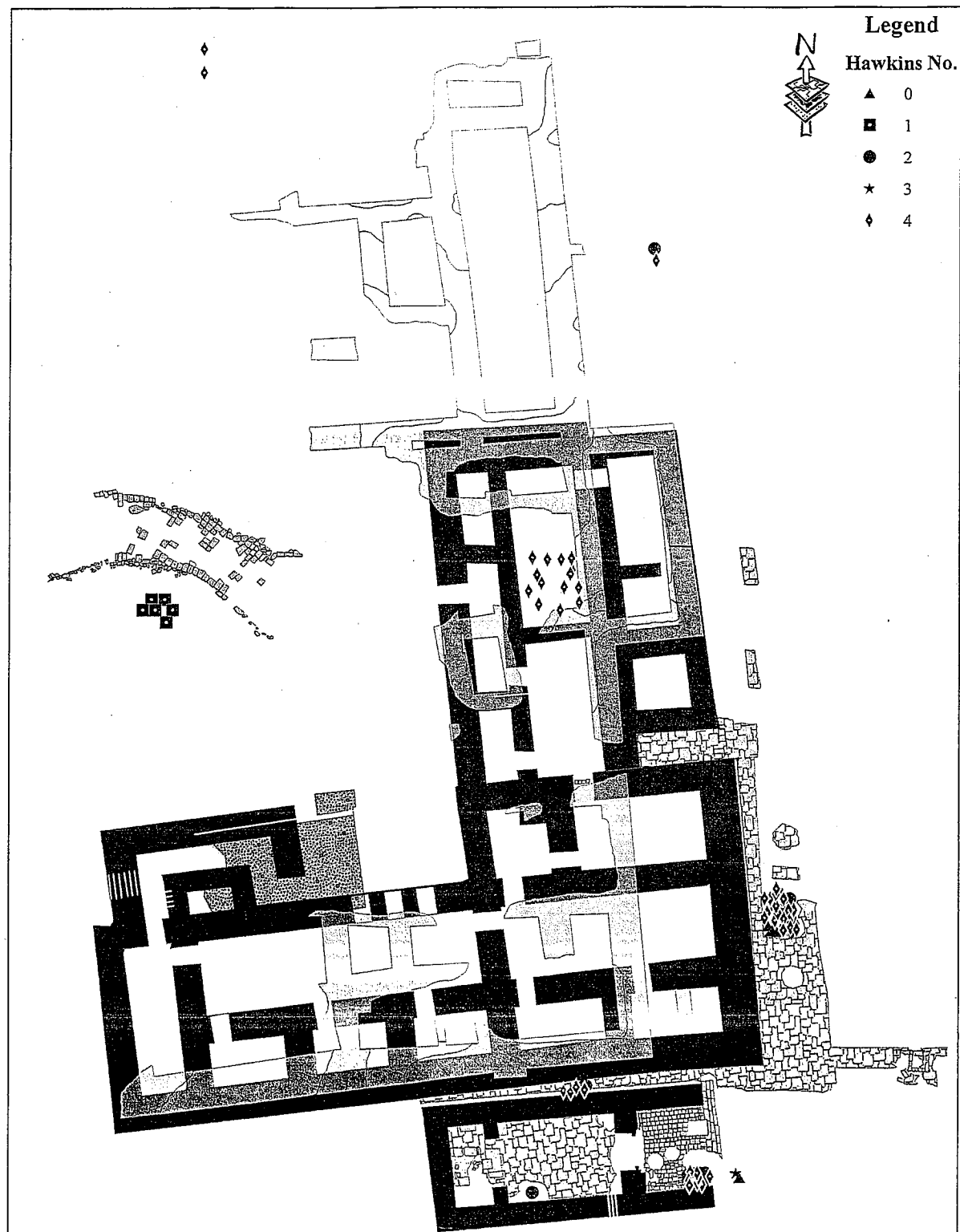*Created by S. Batiuk*

Figure 4. Plan of the spatial distribution of Luwian hieroglyphic fragments in the West Central Area
Created by S. Batiuk

The extraordinary size of the walls in Field II and the rich epigraphic record associated with it certainly mark Building XIV as an important structure. Its apparent date and relative stratigraphic position within the early Iron Age sequence at Tell Taᶜyinat also raises the possibility that it might have been the palatial residence of the kings of Palastin/Walastin. Further work must be done, however, before more definitive conclusions can be drawn about the historical role and function of this remarkable complex.

Summary Observations

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. Indeed, at key centers of Hittite power, such as 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. However, interspersed between these reduced enclaves of Hittite influence, rival political centers, perhaps most importantly at Zincirli (ancient Samᵓal) and Tell Rifaᶜat (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 upon which a diverse cultural (and ethnic) milieu was able to develop and flourish. Out of 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. Despite the evidence for settlement continuity reflected in the survey data, 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 Taᶜyinat. Whether the terminal LB settlement at Alalakh was destroyed or abandoned remains unclear, but the renewed excavations at Tell Taᶜyinat have now demonstrated conclusively that the site was resettled in the early Iron I (early twelfth 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 Taᶜyinat 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 ninth–eighth-century *bīt ḫilani* 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 textual record, has begun to lift the obscuring veil of this Dark Age. In the North Orontes Valley, the evidence points to the emergence of a powerful regional kingdom, the Land of Palastin/Walastin, 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. This early Iron Age polity also exhibits strong Aegean cultural associations, both in its material culture, and now also epigraphically. Its rulers appear to have succeeded in asserting political control for a time over an area that encompassed much of northwest Syria, extending east to Aleppo and south as far as Hama. Centered at Tell Taᶜyinat, the wealth of this hypothesized early Iron Age kingdom are reflected in the impressive buildings and standing monuments of the First Building Period.

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