

## TELL TA'YINAT AND THE KINGDOM OF UNQI

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The role of archaeology in the construction and legitimation of collective cultural identities is coming to be perceived as one of the most important issues in archaeological theory and practice. Throughout the history of archaeology the material record has been attributed to particular past peoples, and the desire to trace the genealogy of present peoples back to their imagined primordial origins has played a significant role in the development of the discipline (Jones 1997: 1).

### *Introduction*

The collapse of Bronze Age civilization in the late second millennium and emergence of territorial nation states in the ensuing Iron Age have been the focus of intensified Near Eastern archaeological scrutiny in recent years. Questions regarding their ethnic origin and composition have preoccupied much of this research. While it has become increasingly evident that cultural groups cannot be viewed as monolithic, homogenous entities, and that tracing the primordial origins of distinct populations is an impossible, even misguided avenue to pursue, it is also clear that ethnicity, and more specifically ethnic identity, played a profound role in shaping the fragmented cultural and political landscape that emerged across much of the Near East at the outset of the Iron Age.

Rather than dismissing ethnicity as inaccessible to archaeological enquiry, recent theoretical discussions urge the adoption of a diachronic, historical approach that draws upon a variety of sources and classes of data to trace changing patterns of social interaction and the distribution of material and symbolic power between groups within a given region over a given period of time (Jones 1997: 125-26). Such an approach reasonably assumes that a link exists between the historically constituted perceptions that inform people's understandings

and actions, their expression through ethnicity, and its articulation in the material record.

This paper therefore will focus on the historical and archaeological record for the early centuries of the first millennium on the 'Amuq Plain. Strategically situated at the juncture between the Syro-Mesopotamian interior to the east, the Mediterranean coast to the west and the Anatolian Highlands to the north, the Amuq preserves extensive archaeological remains from this period. Moreover, historical sources attest to the existence of Luwian, Neo-Hittite and Aramaean ethnic elements in the region during this same period, creating the possibility of establishing links between changes in the material record with a shift in ethnic identity.

### *Historical Sources*

Unfortunately, indigenous documentary sources are scarce, and the few that do exist contain very little information about the political history of the Amuq during the Iron Age. We are forced to rely on abbreviated accounts, drawn primarily from the military annals of Neo-Assyrian kings, for any historical reconstruction. These records nevertheless outline the political geography of the region during the ninth and eighth centuries, and confirm the existence of a small independent Neo-Hittite kingdom confined roughly within the geographical borders of the Amuq Plain.

The earliest references to this kingdom occur in royal inscriptions recounting the ninth campaign of Ashurnasirpal II (c. 870 BCE). The account describes his efforts to subdue a series of kingdoms in north-west Syria, and includes a detailed itinerary of his passage through the region (Grayson 1991: 216-19, text A.O.101.1, col. iii, lines 55-92a; see also Hawkins 1982: 388-90; Liverani 1992: 73-80). After receiving tribute from a number of these kingdoms, including the 'Kingdom of Hatti' (at its capital Carchemish), Ashurnasirpal headed west from the Euphrates to the city of Hazazu (probably Tell 'Azaz), which we are told was ruled by 'Lubarna the Patinu'. Ashurnasirpal then crossed the Apre (modern Afrin) River, and continued on to Kunulua (Tell Ta'yinat, see below), 'the royal city' of Lubarna, where he received tribute. From Kunulua, he crossed the Arantu (modern Orontes) River and headed south through a series of mountain ranges before arriving at Aribua (probably modern Jisr esh-Shughur), 'the fortified city of

Lubarna the Patinu'. From Aribua, Ashurnasirpal proceeded to wage war on 'the cities of the land of Luhutu' (Aramaic Lu'ash), reaching south to the Lebanon Mountains and west to the Mediterranean coast. On his return to Assyria, he detoured through the Amanus Mountains, pausing long enough to obtain lumber and erect a memorial to the campaign.

Ashurnasirpal's description of his passage through Patina clearly situates the kingdom on the Amuq Plain. Moreover, the sequence of geographic features and place names leaves little doubt that Kunulua, the capital of the kingdom, was located near the southern edge of the plain, just north of the point where the Orontes River enters the valley. It therefore should be sought at the extensive mounded site of Ta'yinat (AS 126, see Fig. 1) (Hawkins 1976; 1982: 389 n. 139; Liverani 1992: 74-75), and not at 'Ain Dara, as Orthmann has proposed (1971: 198 n. 21; 1993: 251 n. 42).<sup>1</sup> In addition, we are given the name of the kingdom's ruler, Lubarna, a distinctively Hittite royal name.

Shalmaneser III, Ashurnasirpal's successor, continued the aggressive expansionist policy of his father, launching a series of campaigns against western Syria. In 858, during the first year of his reign, he attacked the Kingdom of Sam'al, encountering a coalition that included 'Sapalulme the Patinean', the apparent successor to Lubarna. After defeating the coalition, Shalmaneser turned south, crossed the Orontes River and laid siege to Alisir/Alimush (in the vicinity of modern Antakya?), 'the fortified city of Sapalulme', which he captured along with a number of other cities in the kingdom (Grayson 1996: A.0.102.2, col. i, line 41b-col. ii, line 10a; see also A.0.102.3). This campaign seems to have broken the resistance of Patina, as the following year (857) Shalmaneser received tribute from Qalparunda, who apparently had replaced Sapalulme in between the two campaigns, and again in 853 and 848 (Grayson 1996: A.0.102.1.92b-95; A.0.102.2, col. ii, line 21; Hawkins 1982: 391-92; 1995: 94-95).<sup>2</sup>

1. Other early candidates have included Tell Jindaris/Jinderez Tepe (AS 58) (Olmstead 1918: 248 n. 67; Braidwood 1937: 25 n. 3), Chatal Höyük (AS 167) (Gelb 1935: 189) and Tell Kuna'na (Elliger 1947: 71), located near the Afrin River.

2. There is significant variation between the two official accounts of the 857 BCE campaign, including the titles given to Qalparunda. In the former, he is referred to as 'the Unqite', the earliest attested occurrence of this designation, while in the latter he is labelled 'the Patinean'.

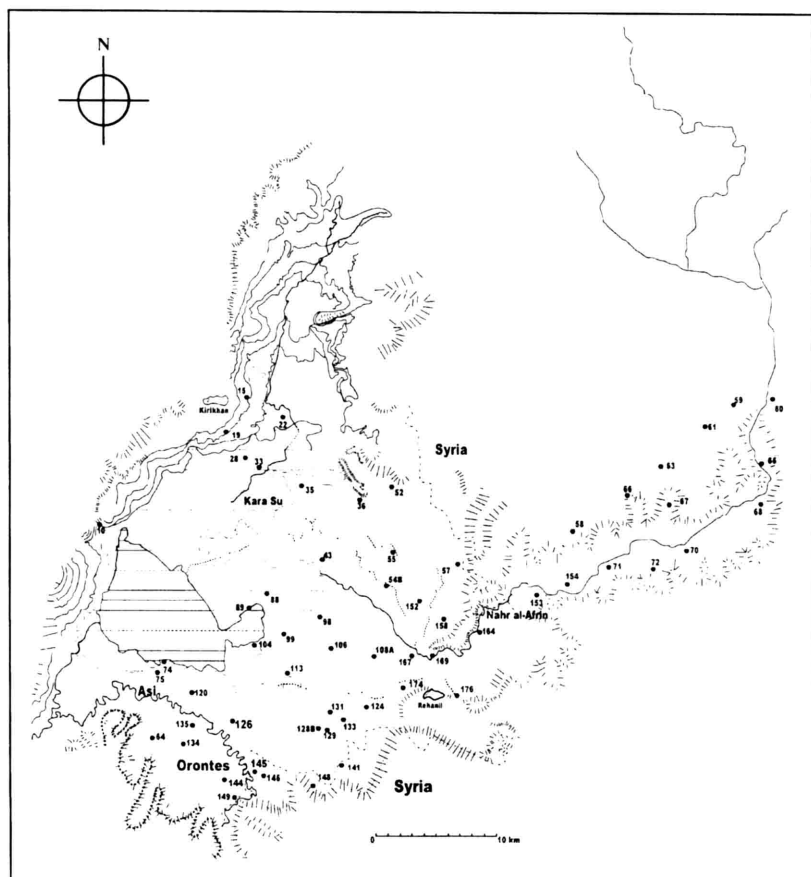


Figure 1. Distribution of Phase O sites in the Amuq Plain  
(created by S. Batiuk, from Yener et al. 2000: Fig. 3).

In addition to the annals, references to the Kingdom of Patina and Qalparunda appear in a number of inscriptions that date to the reign of Shalmaneser. Particularly intriguing are the alternating designations used to refer to Qalparunda and the inhabitants of his kingdom (Hawkins 1975a: 160-61). On the fifth register of the engraved bronze bands of the Balawat Gates, dated approximately to 850, 'the people of Unqi' (gentilic <sup>kur</sup>*un-qa-a-a*), not Patina, are depicted bearing tribute to Shalmaneser (King 1915: Pl. 13; Grayson 1996: A.O.102.69). Similarly, an epigraph on the base of Shalmaneser's throne at Fort Shalmaneser describes a scene carved below in which 'Qalparunda the Unqite' is

portrayed bringing tribute to the Assyrian king (Grayson 1996: A.0.102.60), while an epigraph on the Black Obelisk refers to him as 'the Patinean' (Grayson 1996: A.0.102.91). A fragmentary hieroglyphic inscription uncovered at Tell Ta'yinat preserves an important Luwian corroboration of his name (see further below) (Gelb 1939: 39).

A possible explanation for the interchange between these two designations surfaces in the official account of a campaign conducted in 831 by the *turtan* Dayyan-Ashur against Patina. We are told that Lubarna (II?), king of Patina, was assassinated by 'the people of the land of Patinu' and a commoner (literally 'a non-royal person') named Surri assumed the throne in his place, prompting the Assyrian action. Dayyan-Ashur suppressed the revolt and replaced Surri with Sasi, 'a man of the land Kurussa' (Grayson 1996: A.0.102.14.146b-56a; Hawkins 1982: 395). While this action may have been initiated to demonstrate Shalmaneser's ability to intervene in Syro-Hittite affairs, and his willingness to avenge loyal vassals, it also verifies the emergence of a power struggle within Patina/Unqi; a power struggle that seems to have had ethnic overtones.

The later decades of the ninth century witnessed a decline in Assyrian power, and their official records fall silent regarding political developments in western Syria. The rise to power of Adad-narari III (810-783) marked a limited return, and resulted in a number of campaigns against coalitions of rebellious Syrian states. The first of these, in 805 or 804, was directed against an alliance led by Atarshumki, king of Arpad, which likely included Patina/Unqi (Hawkins 1982: 399-400; Weippert 1992: 56-57). The campaign culminated in a battle at Paqirahubuna commemorated on a boundary stele found near Maraş which had been erected to mark the border between the kingdoms of Kummuh and Gurgum (Donbaz 1990; Hawkins 1995: 93; Grayson 1996: A.0.104.3).

A boundary stele found along the Orontes River to the southwest of Antakya hints at a decisive downturn in the political fortunes of Patina/Unqi. The inscription describes the transfer of the city of Nahlasi (location unknown) along with all its lands and settlements to Atarshumki of Arpad, apparently at the expense of Zakkur of Hamath, and the realignment of the border between the two kingdoms to the Orontes River (Donbaz 1990; Grayson 1996: A.0.104.2). This action appears to have been taken during the campaign of 796, and therefore may be associated with the events recorded on the Aramaic stele of Zakkur found at

Tell Afis (Donner and Röllig 1976: no. 202). In the inscription, Zakkur accuses Bar-Hadad of Damascus of having induced a coalition of northern kingdoms, including ‘MQ’ (clearly the Aramaic equivalent to the Akkadian ‘Unqi’), to attack Lu’ash, the northern province of Hamath. He then claims to have been spared by divine intervention, and presumably also by Assyrian military support. If we accept this scenario, it seems reasonable to assume that the Assyrians mediated the conflict by ceding land to Arpad and its allies in return for the guaranteed safety of Hamath; a diplomatic solution that also may have been intended to isolate Damascus politically (Hawkins 1982: 400, 403-404; Weippert 1992: 58-59; Dion 1997: 128-29).

Whatever the specific ramifications of these developments, it is clear that the political landscape in northwest Syria had shifted by the turn of the century. Moreover, whether we assume that the Antakya stele was found near its original location (cf. Weippert 1992: 58 n. 97), or was transported down the Orontes from a point upriver such as Jisr esh-Shughur (cf. Hawkins 1995: 96), the basic result was the same. At the very least, the territorial extent of Patina/Unqi had been reduced considerably,<sup>3</sup> and the kingdom may even have lost its independence altogether. With the start of the eighth century, therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that Aramaean Bit-Agusi had successfully extended its influence, if not outright control, over the former Neo-Hittite kingdom.

In light of this, the Aramaic ‘MQ’ used in the Zakkur stele to refer to Patina/Unqi takes on added significance. More than simply the Aramaic equivalent to the Akkadian Unqi, it clearly carries an ethnic connotation, acknowledging the Aramaic-speaking West Semitic segment of the population that apparently had now gained the upper hand in the former Luwian stronghold. The shift from Patina to Unqi in the Assyrian records may also reflect the increasing influence and visibility enjoyed by the Aramaeans (Bordreuil 1992: 253-54; Dion 1997: 124-25), in effect documenting a shift in ethnic association that unfolded over the latter half of the ninth century.

The recent publication of a second Aramaic reference to ‘MQ’ (Kyrieleis and Röllig 1988) and the translation of an earlier discovery

3. Possible indirect evidence in support of this occurs in a text dating to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, in which the city of Hazazu, assigned to Patina during the reigns of Ashurnasirpal and Shalmaneser, appears in a list of cities attributed to Bit-Agusi (Hawkins 1975b).

with much the same text (Charbonnet 1986) further substantiate the ethnic character of the term. Preserved on bronze equestrian harness trappings evidently taken as booty 'from 'MQ', the inscriptions, which have been dated on palaeographic grounds to the ninth century, also make reference to Hazael and to 'the year that our lord [i.e. Hazael] crossed the river'.<sup>4</sup> While a number of interpretations are possible, the most plausible historical reconstruction links the events to Hazael of Damascus, and places them sometime between the later years of Shalmaneser's reign and the resurgence of Assyrian power in 805 under Adad-narari (Bron and Lemaire 1989; Eph'al and Naveh 1989; Bordreuil 1992: 254). It is even conceivable that these 'booty inscriptions' allude to events surrounding the revolt and assassination of Lubarna in 831, with Hazael playing an active role in the attempt to overthrow the Assyrian-backed Neo-Hittite regime (Dion 1995: 486; 1997: 201-202). Although tenuous, this possibility would provide a historical explanation for the rise of the Aramaeans to power, and the subsequent shift in the ethnic definition of the region's political culture.

Following the campaign of 796, Assyrian references to the region fall silent until active contact was resumed by Tiglath-pileser III. Significantly, the kingdom and region are referred to exclusively as Unqi. In 738, as part of his second western campaign, we are told that Tiglath-pileser seized a rebellious Unqi, destroyed Kunulua, and deported its king Tutammu and many of its citizens. He then rebuilt the capital, settled people displaced from elsewhere in the empire, and created the province of Kullani (a variant of the name of the former capital) (Luckenbill 1926: paras. 769, 770 and 772; Hawkins 1974: 81-83; 1982: 410-11; Weippert 1982: 395-96). Thereafter, the region remained firmly under Assyrian control until the collapse of the empire, receiving only passing mention during the reigns of Esarhaddon (the provincial governor was listed as a limu official in 684) and Ashurbanipal (Hawkins 1982: 425).

Although limited, when taken as a whole, the existing Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic sources point consistently to a decisive change in the

4. A strikingly similar bronze frontlet was actually recovered during the Oriental Institute excavations at Tell Ta'yinat in Room L of Building I in the West Central Area. The precise stratigraphic context in which the frontlet was discovered is not clear, but appears to date to the late eighth or seventh centuries BCE, although the frontlet itself may well have originated from a much earlier time. For a detailed art historical study of this piece, see Kantor (1962).

political order of late ninth century northwest Syria. Moreover, this change clearly coincided with the rise of the Aramaeans. A review of the archaeological record reveals a corresponding cultural shift, further highlighting the role ethnic identity appears to have played in the mediation of this political transfer of power.

### *The Archaeology of the Amuq Plain*

#### *Settlement Patterns*

Survey data for the Amuq Plain indicate a relative decline in settlement during the Late Bronze Age that mirrors a general decline throughout the Near East during this period (Yener *et al.* 2000; McClellan 1992). A sharp increase reversed this trend during the Iron Age, with the number of sites almost doubling. The original Braidwood survey, conducted as part of the Syrian Expedition of the Oriental Institute in the 1930s, recorded 30 Late Bronze Age (their Phase VI, or M), 47 Early Iron Age (c. 1200–1000 BCE; their Phase V, or N) and 58 Iron Age (c. 1000–500 BCE; their Phase IV or O) sites (Braidwood 1937).

When examined more closely, the original survey data reveal a number of interesting patterns. Seventeen of the 30 known LBA/Amuq M sites, or 57 per cent, also preserved evidence of Early Iron Age (Amuq N) occupation, suggesting significant continuity between the two periods. However, these 17 sites account for little more than one-third of the total number of recorded Amuq N sites. Fully 74 per cent, 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 multiple-period mounds with long occupational sequences. In contrast, the evidence for continuity between Phases N and O is unambiguously clear. Thirty-five of the 47 known Amuq N sites, or a remarkable 75 per cent, were also occupied in Phase O. Of the 23 sites newly occupied in Phase O, 40 per cent of the total, all except 2 (Tell Ta'yinat [AS 126] and AS 131, see Fig. 1) represented small (<3 ha) settlements.

Site-size data derived from the new Amuq Valley Regional Project Survey further clarify the apparent shift toward settlement intensification evident in the site totals (see Table 1). While aggregate settled area also increased progressively, more telling is average site size, which actually decreased from 4.76 ha in Phase M to 3.63 ha by Phase O, a trend that is repeated when median site size is calculated (note,



however, the high standard deviations in each case). What these data fail to reveal is the emergence of Tell Ta'yinat as the dominant settlement on the plain. As the distribution of site-size data in Table 2 suggests, a decisive shift to a single integrated settlement network seems to have occurred during Phase O. Site-size distributions remained relatively stable during 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). During Phase O, however, more than 80 per cent of the sites ( $n = 26$ ) were small, while only 16 per cent ( $n = 5$ ) were medium, with Tell Ta'yinat, at 35 ha (or 30 per cent of the known settled area for this period), more than three times larger than the next settlement (Chatal Höyük, AS 167) in the site-size hierarchy.

Table 1. *Site-Size Distribution by Period\**

	Phase M	Phase N	Phase O
No. of Observed Sites	16	22	32
Aggregate Site Area (ha)	76.10	79.41	116.08
Mean Site-Size (ha)	4.76	3.61	3.63
Standard Deviation	4.32	3.53	6.30
Median Site-Size (ha)	2.85	2.89	1.69

\* The site-size data used to generate these statistics were drawn from the Amuq Valley Regional Project Survey (AVRPS) Database compiled by Jan Verstraete, and only represents those sites in the original Braidwood survey that the AVRPS has been permitted to resurvey.

Table 2. *Distribution of Site-Size Type by Period*

Period	Small (<5 ha)	Medium (5-15 ha)	Large (>15 ha)	Total
Phase M	10 (62.5%)	6 (37.5%)	0 (0%)	16
Phase N	15 (68.0%)	7 (32.0%)	0 (0%)	22
Phase O	26 (81.0%)	5 (16.0%)	1 (3%)	32

The dominance of Tell Ta'yinat is also reflected in the spatial distribution of Phase O sites, which shows a heavy concentration in the southern part of the plain around this central site (Fig. 1). A second concentration forms a band along the Afrin corridor, emphasizing the importance of the link to the east during this period. It is also worth noting that the Braidwood survey did not find any of the characteristic

wares associated with Phase O at sites along the Kara Su valley in the northern part of the plain (Braidwood 1937: 48). Although the report is not more specific, this presumably means that the distinctive Red-Slipped Burnished Ware (RSBW), the ceramic tradition that defines Phase O, was absent at these sites. In any case, the survey data indicate that during the early centuries of the first millennium the 'Amuq Plain was transformed into an integrated, urbanized landscape, with Ta'yinat at its centre.

### *Tell Ta'yinat*

Tell Ta'yinat forms a large, low-lying mound 1.5 km east of Demirköprü (the former Jisr al-Hadid) on the Orontes River. The site consists of an upper and lower mound, with the lower mound now hidden by alluvial accumulation. The upper mound sits just north of the modern Antakya-Reyhanli road, and measures approximately 400 m (E-W) by 500 m (N-S). An intensive and systematic surface survey conducted by the author in August 1999 established the parameters of the lower mound. Sherd density distributions indicate that it extended north of the upper mound approximately 200 m and west approximately 100 m, bringing the overall size of the site to 500 x 700 m (or 35 ha).<sup>5</sup>

Large-scale excavations were conducted at Ta'yinat by a team from the University of Chicago over four field seasons between 1935 and 1938 as part of the Syrian Expedition of the Oriental Institute. The excavations focused primarily on the west central part of the upper mound, although areas were also opened on the eastern and southern edges of the upper mound and in the lower city (Fig. 2). In all, the excavations achieved large horizontal exposures of five distinct architectural phases, or 'Building Periods', dating to Phase O (c. 950–550 BCE) (Haines 1971: 64–66). A series of isolated soundings below the earliest Phase O floors produced remains dating to the third millennium (primarily Phases I–J, but also H) (Braidwood and Braidwood 1960: 13–14), indicating a lengthy period of abandonment prior to the establishment of the initial Phase O settlement.

5. These measurements differ slightly from those of Haines, who estimated the size of the site at 500 x 620 m (1971: 37), but match the figures given in Braidwood and Braidwood (1960: 13). I wish to thank Stephen Batiuk, Sarah Graff, Heather Snow and Hamdi Ekiz of the Museum of Anatolian Civilization in Ankara, who ably assisted me with the survey, and the Curtiss T. and Mary G. Brennan Foundation for providing the funding that made it possible.

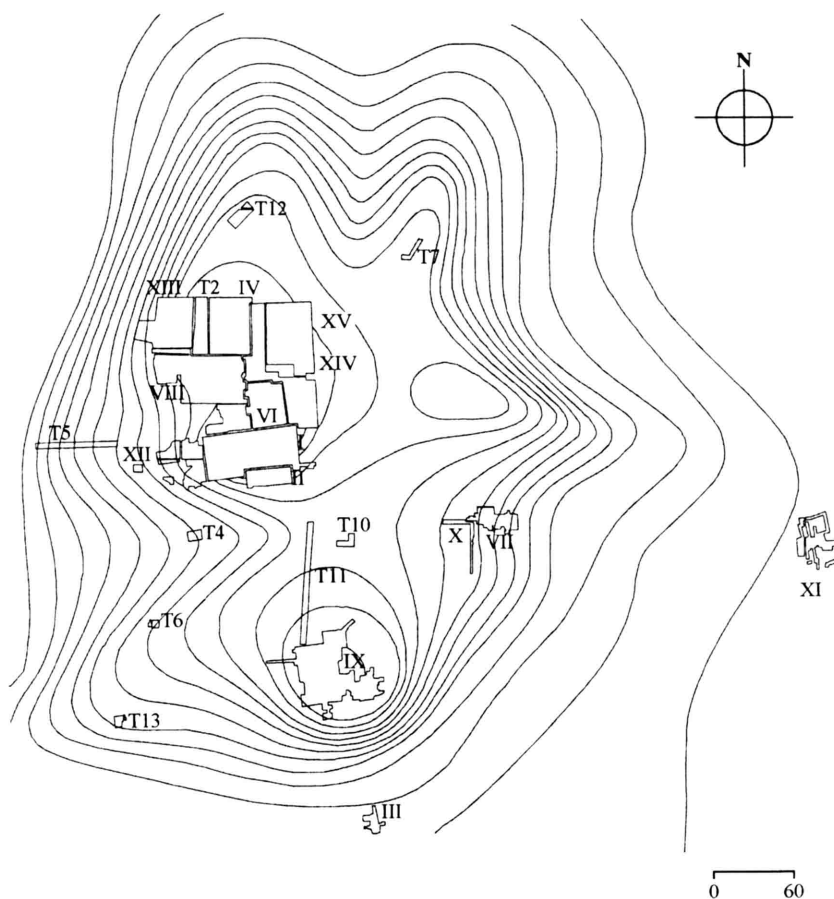


Figure 2. *Topographic map of Tell Ta'yinat (created by S. Batiuk, from Haines 1971: Pl. 93).*

### *Architecture*

Remains of the First Building Period were exposed primarily in the West Central Area, and included two large structures (Buildings XIII and XIV) apparently arranged around an open courtyard (Fig. 2). The northern of the two, Building XIII, preserved the distinctive ground plan of a North Syrian *bit hilani* (Haines 1971: 38-40, 64).

During the Second Building Period, these two structures were levelled and an entirely new complex of buildings erected in their place, including the most famous of Ta'yinat's *bit hilani* palaces, Building I, with its adjacent *megaron*-style temple (Building II).

Building I, along with a northern annex (Building VI) and a second *bit hilani* (Building IV), faced on to a paved central courtyard (Courtyard VIII) (Fig. 2). A paved street linked the courtyard to a large gate (Gateway XII) that provided access to the upper city. A second gate (Gateway VII) on the eastern edge of the upper mound, and two gates in the lower city (Gateways III and XI) were also assigned to this building phase (Haines 1971: 64-65).

Renovations to the buildings in the West Central Area accounted for most of the activity during the Third Building Period. In addition, the construction of a large structure (Building IX) resembling an Assyrian provincial palace on the knoll at the southern end of the mound was tentatively assigned by the excavators to this phase as well. The Fourth Building Period witnessed the continued occupation of the *bit hilani* in the West Central Area, but saw the abandonment of the temple. Finally, the fragmentary remains of a Fifth Building Period were preserved on the highest parts of the upper mound (Haines 1971: 65-66).

### *Ceramics*

Although a full report of the Ta'yinat excavations has yet to appear, a doctoral dissertation has produced a preliminary study of the second and first millennium pottery (Phases K through O) gathered during the Oriental Institute Expedition to the Amuq (Swift 1958). In contrast to the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age (Phases M and N) transition, the Phase N to Phase O transition was a smooth one, without any evident stratigraphic break at sites that produced material from both phases. This mirrors the pattern reflected in the survey data described above. Nevertheless, a significant new ceramic tradition was introduced with Phase O. While Common Painted and Simple Wares continued (with some modification) from Phase N, the appearance of Red-Slipped Burnished Ware (RSBW) coincided with the earliest levels of Phase O, making it the primary marker for the start of the phase (Swift 1958: 124-26).

Drawing on the architectural and artifactual evidence recovered from the Iron Age levels at Chatal Höyük, Judaidah and Ta'yinat, Swift proposed a four-stage developmental sequence for Phase O, which he labelled Stages Oa-Od, with ceramic imports and key historical events providing a chronological framework. Each stage also coincided with changes in the surface treatment of RSBW. Hand burnishing occurred exclusively in Stage Oa (c. 950-900), with wheel burnishing intro-

duced alongside it in Stage Ob (c. 900–800), and then eclipsing it as the predominant surface treatment in Stages Oc (c. 800–725) and Od (c. 725–550) (Swift 1958: 139–41, and his Table 11). Sherds of eighth century Attic Geometric pottery were recovered from Stage Oc levels, while Corinthian and Attic Black Figure Wares, along with Assyrian Palace Ware, were found exclusively in Stage Od (Swift 1958: 154–55).

*Inscriptions, Reliefs, and Miscellaneous Artifacts*

The Ta'yinat excavations also produced an extensive corpus of Akkadian, Aramaic and Neo-Hittite (or Luwian) inscriptions. Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions accounted for the largest number, a total of 85 fragments, 32 of which have been shown to come from seven distinct monumental inscriptions (Gelb 1939: 38–40).<sup>6</sup> One of these, preserved as six basalt fragments, had been carved on a colossal statue seated on a throne. Although its precise provenience is not clear,<sup>7</sup> the inscription makes reference to *Halpa<sup>pa</sup>-runta-a-s(a)*, presumably the same Qalparunda who paid tribute to Shalmaneser III during the mid-ninth century. If this historical link is accepted, it further strengthens Ta'yinat's identification as Kunulua, capital of the kingdom of Patina/Unqi.

It also provides a secure date for the remainder of the Luwian inscriptions found at the site, and raises the possibility of isolating the Building Period, and cultural horizon, in which they were erected. With only a few exceptions, all of the fragments appear to have been found in the fill or foundation trenches of structures dating to the Second Building Period (Gelb 1939: 39–40; Haines 1971: 66); in other words, in secondary and tertiary contexts. Moreover, with only one exception (an altar in obvious secondary reuse in the temple, Building II), all of the inscriptions clearly had been smashed and destroyed before being discarded. The Qalparunda inscription therefore dates the Luwian material at Ta'yinat to the mid-ninth century or earlier, while their stratigraphic context places their original use in the First Building Period. At some point in the latter part of the ninth century, the

6. A Neo-Hittite relief carved on a basalt orthostat was found at Ta'yinat in 1896, but was published subsequently without significant contextual information (Braidwood 1937: 33; Orthmann 1971: 83).

7. Gelb locates it near the 'East Gate,' but does not specify whether he is referring to the upper or lower city (1939: 39), while Haines states that it was found 'in the debris' of Courtyard VIII in the West Central Area (1971: 41).

buildings in the West Central Area associated with this phase were levelled and, it would seem, the visible symbols and expressions of Luwian culture were destroyed intentionally with them then as well.

A number of pottery sherds and small stone artifacts inscribed in Aramaic were uncovered during the Oriental Institute excavations at Ta'yinat. While this material remains unpublished, one inscription has received some attention. Fragments of a small bowl of 'late phase O ware' were found inscribed with the word KNLH (or KNLYH), tantalizingly similar linguistically to Kunulua, capital of the kingdom of Patina/Unqi. The paleography of the inscription suggested a seventh-century date (Swift 1958: 191-92). It is not clear whether this is the same Aramaic-inscribed sherd reported by Haines to have been found on Floor 2 of Building I in the West Central Area (Haines 1971: 66). If so, this inscription would place the Third Building Period in Swift's Od sub-phase, while further confirming the historical identification of the site.

Cuneiform inscriptions recovered during the course of the excavations included four small monument fragments, five tablets and a stone cylinder seal. The most informative Neo-Assyrian epigraphic text, however, was a dedication 'for the life of Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria,' carved on an ornamental copper disk found in the vicinity of Building I, and assigned by the excavators to its second level (or Floor 2) (Swift 1958: 183-84; Kantor 1962: 93-94). In spite of its uncertain stratigraphic context, this votive would seem to corroborate the dating of the Third Building Period, linking its founding levels to the beginning of sub-phase Od, and placing the Second Building Period squarely within sub-phase Oc (c. 800-725). Six limestone orthostats found reused in the upper pavement of Gateway VII, carved in the Assyrian provincial style, and a bronze statuette provide further attestation of the symbolic capital invested by the Neo-Assyrians following their conquest of the site (McEwan 1937: Figs. 9-10; Haines 1971: 60; Orthmann 1971: 83).

### *Tell Ta'yinat and the Kingdom of Unqi*

As we have seen, historical sources point to a decisive shift in the political order during the latter part of the ninth century in the Amuq region. Moreover, the archaeological record for this same period portrays a corresponding transformation of the cultural landscape. Survey data reveal an urbanization process that culminated with the emergence

of Ta'yinat as the dominant settlement on the plain. Stratigraphic excavations, meanwhile, substantiate the growth of Ta'yinat, which reached 35 ha during the Second Building Period, when settlement expanded off the upper mound and into the lower city.<sup>8</sup> The epigraphic and artifactual evidence assigns this phase in the settlement history of the site to the late ninth and eighth centuries, while confirming its historical identification with Kunulua, capital of the kingdom of Patina/Unqi.

Whatever the specific historical circumstances, however, the archaeological evidence also indicates that this transformation was linked to a broader cultural conflict, one which found expression through the articulation and rejection of competing ethnic identities. As late as the ninth century, Ta'yinat still preserved the venerable manifestations of Luwian culture, and presumably the power structures that these visual symbols reinforced as well. By the end of the century, however, they were gone, violently destroyed and replaced with the physical representations of a new cultural and ethnic identity. While the basic composition of the population probably remained little changed, the city itself was completely rebuilt, taking on a physical appearance that reflected the traditions and values of a newly emerged Aramaean ruling elite. The Luwian kingdom of Patina had been transformed into the Aramaean kingdom of Unqi.

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8. For a similar reconstruction of the settlement history at Ta'yinat, see Mazzoni (1994; 1995: 188), who situates the urban development of Ta'yinat within a broader urbanization process that occurred across northwestern Syria prior to the Assyrian conquest.

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