

Excavations of Early Bronze Age and Early Iron Age periods at Tell Tayinat, Hatay, Turkey

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Tell Tayinat lies on the south-west edge of the Anuq valley, on the east bank of the Orontes River in south-east Turkey. It is now a low-lying mound due to many years of deposits from the many rivers in the valley around its base. In the early Bronze and early Iron Age it was the site of ancient Kinalna, the capital of one of the Neo Hittite/Aramean city Kingdoms of Palistin (Patina). A temple was built on the mound in the 10th/9th Century BC, but was destroyed by fire in the 8th Century BC. Some excavations were carried out in the 1930s and the temple and palaces were found. These were re-excavated in 1999 and The University of Toronto carried out a survey in 2003, followed by excavations in 2004 and continuing until 2012.

Over the years, heavy basalt column bases were found, statues, mud-brick buildings, stone floors and stelae covered by hieroglyphs. There were also a full size standing lion, beautifully carved with a snarling mouth, one sitting on its haunches, a lioness and a Master of Animals, all from the early Iron Age. Bronze and ivory wall and furniture fittings, with gold and silver foil have been recovered. A cache of cuneiform tablets were uncovered, telling stories, lists of goods and the important Esarhaddon Succession Treaty, a treaty of the Governor of the land of Kualia, containing his exploits as well as a curse.

A large unique statue was found buried at the gateway into the city dating to the 9th/8th Century BC. This statue would have stood 12 ft tall, but only the top half, above the waist was well preserved and consisted of a bearded man, with curly hair and eyes made of black and white stones. He has two bracelets on each arm, decorated with lion's heads, a sheaf of wheat in one hand and a spear in the other. On his back is an inscription telling the accomplishments and campaigns of King Suppiluliuma.

Excavations are continuing subject to the ongoing conflict in Syria.