

HENRIETTA HERBOLSHEIMER SYRO-ANATOLIAN GALLERY

K. ASLIHAN YENER, DIRECTOR, THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE EXPEDITION TO ALALAKH

“Empires of the Fertile Crescent: Ancient Assyria, Anatolia, and Israel” opens in the East Wing of the Oriental Institute Museum and exhibits previous investigations in these well-known regions of the ancient Near East. The word “Anatolia” evokes certain responses about unique highland empires (the Hittites), Troy and the Homeric legends, precocious technological advancements in metallurgy (Göltepe and Kestel mine), and complex ritual symbolism during the period of the earliest settled villages, the Neolithic ca. 9000–6000 BC. Beginning with the aceramic Neolithic period, sites such as Çatahöyük near Konya display characteristics that identify a cohesive and spectacular visual imagery that continues throughout the millennia.

The Henrietta Herbolsheimer Syro-Anatolian Gallery presents a condensed and thoughtful study of the finds from Oriental Institute Expeditions to central Turkey and the multitudes of excavations in the Amuq Valley during the 1930s. As guest curator of these collections, what a surprise it was to discover crates of wonderful artifacts, some never before exhibited or published. Indeed, the collection is so vast that it was only possible to select highlights from Tayinat, Judaidah, Dhahab, Kurdu, Göltepe, Kestel, Chatal Höyük, and Alishar.

A number of themes have been developed that underscore some of the contributions of this region of multiple, often widely divergent cultural configurations and ethnic diversity. Stressing the importance of strong local expressions in this Gallery, other ideas relevant to Syro-Anatolia are also explored such as the role of technology and trade, connectivity with other regions, and the path-breaking development of regional surveys and cultural chronologies, especially based on research in the Amuq. The Amuq sequence case represents a stratigraphy of sequential architectural levels and finds that begin with material

culture from Amuq Phase A to Amuq Phase V (twenty-two phases from ca. 6000 BC to present). This essential tool has been used as a chronological key not only for the Amuq and the northern Levant, but in neighboring regions as well.

Another theme is technological know-how. Technological knowledge is not only the capability to transform raw materials into finished objects. It has been shown that cultural logic, not just physical constraints, shape productive pathways. How artifacts were manufactured, how they circulated, and how they were used, all provide information about the objects, how they conveyed status, and the social milieu in which they were located.

The polymetallic bronze figurines from Judaidah (Amuq Phase G, ca. 3000 BC) represent the oldest use of tin as an alloying metal in the Near East. Made of copper, tin, silver, and gold, these powerful iconic images of males and females festooned with rings and necklaces, brandishing weapons, signify the important interaction between technology and ideology. Through recent advances in instrumental analyses at the Advanced Photon Source at Argonne National Laboratories, ancient lead solder repairs were detected on the male figurine.

Discoveries such as the Early Bronze Age (ca. 3000–2000 BC) tin mine at Kestel and the miner’s village, Göltepe, in the central Taurus Mountains demonstrate the importance of metal technology in Anatolian society. The Taurus Range is also known as the “silver mountains” of Hittite and Mesopotamian legends. In general, silver and other metals were used as a medium of exchange and a standard of value. Often transported in the form of cast ingots, during the Late Bronze Age tons of copper “ox-hide” shaped ingots were excavated at a shipwreck off the coast of southern Turkey at Uluburun-Kaş. A miniature vo-



Tin bronzes, Phase G, ca. 3000 BC. Tell Judaidah. OIM A24198, A24199, A24007, and A24008



Column base. Iron Age. Tell Tayinat. OIM A27859



Atchana ware. Tell Tayinat. Ca. 1400–1200 BC. OIM A27849

tive model of a copper ingot, which was found ritually deposited in Egypt is displayed in the technology case.

The collapse of the Hittite Empire in central Anatolia brought with it the rise of smaller, independent kingdoms, some continuing the dynastic traditions of the earlier culture, and scattered widely throughout southeastern Turkey, along the Levantine coast and northern Syria. One of these was the kingdom of Wadasatini, the Luwian name for the Amuq Valley

which was later variously called Kunulua/Pattina/Unqi. The capital of this large, perhaps expansionist kingdom is thought to have been located at the site of Tayinat after the collapse of the Late Bronze Age capital, Alalakh, its sister site 700 meters away. As director of the newly reactivated site of Alalakh, it is especially satisfying to me that Tayinat, too, has now recently been granted an excavation permit so that both capitals can be explored more fully. Tim Harrison of the University of Toronto has had a successful first season of excavations at this important capital city, continuing the pioneering work of the Oriental Institute.

The expressions of power and symbols of Iron Age kingship are all displayed in various cases from the Oriental Institute expedition to Tayinat. These include a huge, but damaged bust, perhaps the sculpture of a king with its statue base and two basalt capitals with Luwian inscriptions as well as a basalt sphinx and large stone column base decorated with acanthus leaves. Obviously damaged, some perhaps intentionally by internal turmoil during the Iron Age and certainly others by the marauding Assyrian armies, all represent fragmentary remains of monumental decorations from the temples and palaces of Tayinat. The large column base demonstrates the scale of these buildings.

Glimpses can also be caught of the colorful ethnic composition of Syro-Anatolia through the languages found in the inscriptions. Especially notable are the Luwian inscriptions in relief on these sculptural pieces and building orthostats, continuing one of the Indo-European language of the Hittite Empire into the Iron Age. Inscriptions in Assyrian, Egyptian on hieroglyphic seals, and Late Bronze Age inscriptions on tablets excavated at Alalakh in Hurrian, Hittite, and Akkadian point to the diversity of peoples and cultures in the East Wing Galleries.
