



Iron Age Urbanization and Middle Bronze Age Networks at Zincirli Höyük: Recent Results from the Chicago-Tübingen Excavations

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The recent excavations at Zincirli, Turkey, ancient Sam'al, have produced a more detailed, dynamic, and holistic picture of the urbanization of this Syro-Hittite capital and its role in the formation of an Iron Age territorial state. They have also revealed a monumental complex of the Middle Bronze Age II.

For the Iron Age, excavations in the citadel and north and south lower town have allowed comparison of the stratigraphic, ceramic, and radiocarbon sequences of different parts of the city, while revealing functional and socioeconomic variation. The results revise and refine the conventional view of Sam'al's urbanization. Urbanization took place in at least two stages: the occupation and fortification of the central mound, accompanying an initial claim of royal supremacy, preceded the nucleation of a large population in the lower town, consolidating the king's power. The first modest residential settlement was gradually replaced by more specialized quarters, as population aggregation had the (perhaps unintended) effect of spurring social and economic differentiation.

Neighboring the MBA monumental building "Hilani I", the rooms of Complex DD produced evidence for food and perhaps wine production and storage, as well as textile production. Certain vessel types and cylinder seals indicate that Zincirli played a role in an exchange network linking the Euphrates, North Syria, and Central Anatolia. This complex was destroyed in the mid- to late 17th century B.C., possibly by Hattušili I in his campaign against Zalwar (Zalpa), which may have aimed to disrupt or co-opt this network connected to Aleppo.