

## RESEARCH

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY IN THE AMUQ VALLEY

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One of the remarkable features of the Amuq is its topographic diversity. It does not consist simply of a plain but is surrounded by the high peaks of the Amanus mountains to the west, heavily eroded and virtually bare limestone hills to the east and south, and a rather more chaotic pattern of eroded hills to the southwest. Whereas in the original pioneering survey of the 1930s, Robert Braidwood concentrated his attention on the mounds of the plain, we are now trying to get a more holistic view of settlement by surveying sample areas of the complex mosaic of the fringing uplands and their constituent valleys. Therefore during the 2000 and 2001 field seasons the emphasis of survey changed from a focus upon the plains toward a broader study of the Amuq within its topographic setting. There has always been a rather embarrassing gap between those surveys that have chronicled the abundance of Roman and Byzantine sites on the Levantine uplands and others that concentrated upon the scatter of mounded sites on the plains. For the Amuq we are now trying to sew the two survey universes together by surveying the uplands in between.

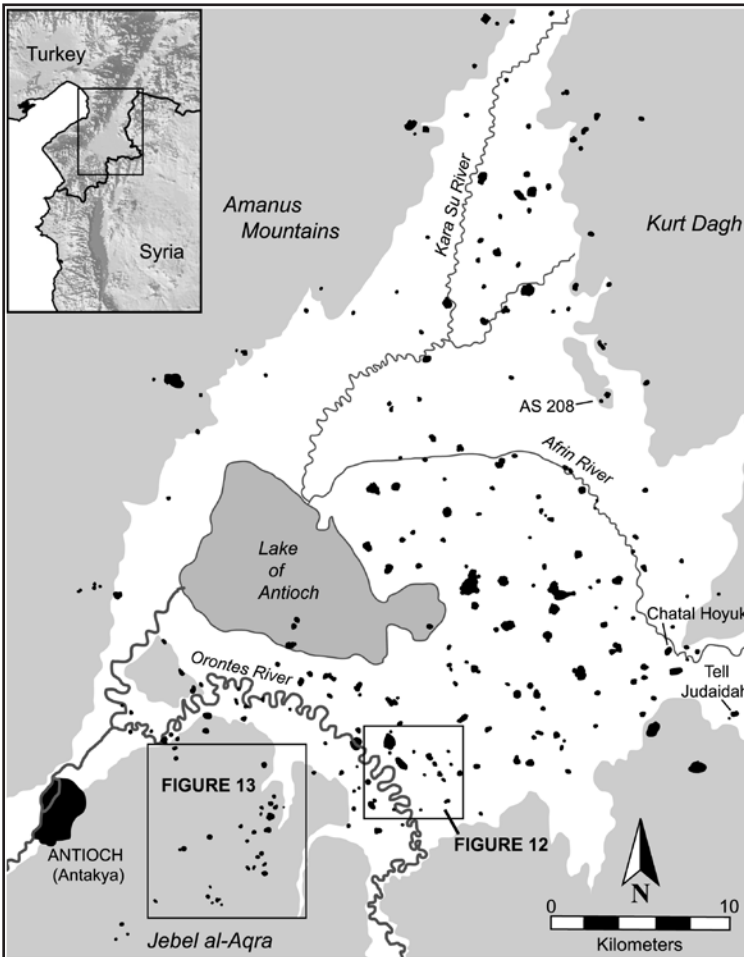
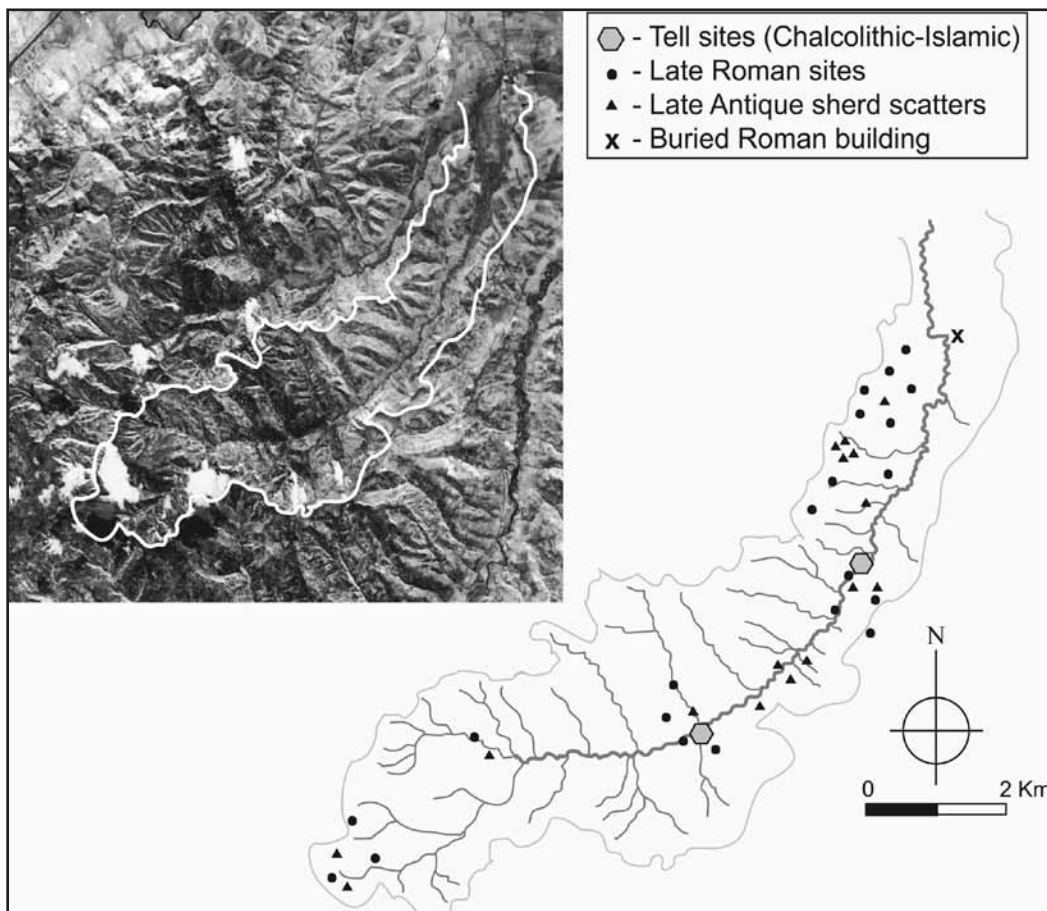


Figure 1. Location of the Amuq surveys conducted in 2001. Map by Jesse Casana

Survey would not have been possible without the administrative umbrella provided by the Amuq Valley Regional Project, directed by Aslihan Yener; thanks also go to the rector and provost of Mustafa Kemal University, Haluk Ipek and Miktat Doğanlar, respectively, for logistical support; to Rana Özbal (Northwestern University) who helped with logistics and administration; and to the Turkish Ministry of Culture, Directorate General of Monuments and Museums for the timely provision of permits and representatives. Funding was provided by the National Geographic Society and a grant from the Ryerson Fund to Jesse Casana.

The fieldwork, being undertaken by Jesse Casana under my direction, entailed much more than simply tying up loose ends. Rather, it explored a fundamental change that took place in the pattern



*Figure 2. The valley surveyed in 2001. Map by Jesse Casana*

of settlement in the northern Levant after the Bronze Age. This is best illustrated by the results of the 2001 survey that was conducted in a small valley in the southwest part of the Amuq (fig. 1). This pleasant and tranquil valley was surveyed by a small team comprising myself, Jesse Casana, Asa Eger, and Hatice Pamir. Overall, only two pre-Hellenistic sites were recorded in the entire valley. These took the form of small tells (AS 252 and 253) located on the valley floor, each of which exhibited abundant Bronze and Iron Age artifacts, together with some later occupation. On the other hand, survey of the ridges and hilltops overlooking the valley floor revealed that archaeological sites were indeed common but were consistently of Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and in some cases Islamic date. Therefore, even though we recovered only some twenty-three sites and sherd scatters (and our survey coverage was not complete), we have very consistent evidence that Bronze and Iron Age settlement occurred on tell settlements on the valley floor, after which during the Roman/Byzantine period, settlement dispersed away from the valley floors to colonize the previously unoccupied hillslopes and hilltops (fig. 2).

The dramatic change in the cultural landscape from tell-based settlement in the Bronze and Iron Ages to a dispersed pattern of smaller farmsteads, villas, and hamlets in the Hellenistic, Roman, and later periods can also be discerned on the Amuq plain. There Jesse has been using declassified CORONA satellite images to reveal a scatter of smaller sites around the main masses of Tells Tayinat and Atchana (fig. 3). These CORONA images are proving

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to be a great boon to archaeologists because, as discussed in the *1999/2000 Annual Report*, they are of high resolution and having been taken in the 1960s and early 1970s they lack the agricultural and industrial clutter that is so evident on satellite images taken in the last decade or so. Although by no means all of the small outlying sites illustrated on this image have been surveyed, those that have are of Hellenistic, Roman, and later date, which again suggests that after the Bronze or Iron Ages there was a marked movement of population into outlying smaller villages, hamlets, and farmsteads.

Overall, this dramatic shift in settlement type appears to get underway approximately during the dark age that intervened between the late Bronze Age and the Iron Age (around 1200 BC). The most dramatic manifestation of this shift occurs in the Roman and Byzantine periods at which time the Levant and southern parts of Turkey were experiencing a major expansion of the economy. This was particularly evident in the form of the extension of villages across the limestone uplands. The development of these settlements, with their numerous churches and traces of oil and grape presses, appears to have been stimulated by a major growth in the economy that was geared, at least in part, toward the export of wine and oil as well as the supply of these commodities to booming cities such as Antioch and Apamea.

One outcome of this extension of occupation away from the traditional settlement foci and on to the uplands was that there appears to have been more agriculture and cultiva-



Figure 3. CORONA satellite image of the Atchana/Tayinat area, Turkey. Map by Jesse Casana

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tion on fragile hillslopes. As a result much more soil was washed off the hills, so that the valley floors were clogged with large quantities of sediment as is well illustrated by the accompanying view (fig. 4). This pattern of settlement extension and associated accumulation of sediments on valley floors was also recorded in earlier field seasons along the Amanus flanks near Kirikhan. In 2001 we therefore revisited the same area to survey the settlement pattern on the adjacent area of uplands. In this



*Figure 4. Building of Roman-Byzantine date covered by sediments eroded from the surrounding hills. Amuq Valley, Turkey. Photograph by Tony J. Wilkinson*

case we found that although there was a wide range of Hellenistic and Roman remains, traces of pre-Hellenistic settlement were absent. What was particularly exciting was the presence of a hilltop temple of Hellenistic date, overlooking rock-cut tombs (fig. 5), as well as two small towns at lower elevations. Of these one was a very unusual Hellenistic foundation consisting of a rectangular earthwork on the edge of the plain, and the other what appears to have been a late Roman-Byzantine settlement of unknown size below the present village of Celanlı.

We have not undertaken survey within the city of Antioch itself, but the recent expansion of modern suburbs has also resulted in the destruction of a number of Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic suburbs of ancient Antioch. Although Hatice Pamir and I had made some preliminary investigations of these remains in an earlier field season, Jesse Casana with the help of Asa Egar undertook more detailed recording and mapping in 2001. This exercise in salvage archaeology has recorded parts of buildings, mosaic floors, an aqueduct, foundations for possible water mills, and even a building that appears to have tumbled down at the time of one of the famous sixth-century AD earthquakes of Antioch. Clearly the effort to record these ruins prior to their total destruction has been very successful, but it is clear that much more salvage work needs to be done to provide even a skeletal record of this, one of the great cities of the ancient world.



*Figure 5. Rock-cut tombs below the temple near Celanlı, Turkey. Photograph by Tony J. Wilkinson*