Border Descriptions and Cultural Barriers

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Hittite texts are a rich source for border-descriptions in the ancient Near East, their prolific and often detailed nature indicating the significance of borders in Hittite worldview of international affairs.[1] Carriers of Hittite worldviews, traditions regarding borders, their character and functions have infiltrated boundaries of time, zone, ethnic and cultural developments and were inherited and absorbed by later cultures. These literary traditions and political practices augment the already acknowledged vestiges of Hittite culture in eastern Anatolia and Syria expressed in many Hittite-rooted traditions, such as the recurrence of famous Hittite king names in the entire region, continued use of royal titulary and iconographic images.[2]

This paper will attempt to trace the literary and cultural links reflected in international border traditions from the Hittite Empire to peoples of the first millenium B.C.E. It will focus on the continuity and transformation of Hittite concepts and practices of borders exemplified in Syro-Anatolian kingdoms before their annexation to Assyria in the 8th century B.C.E., and biblical Israel. The paper will trace these late reflections of Hittite heritage, denoting their dependence on former traditions as well as their divergences. It will reveal an important aspect of the nature of the adoptive cultures, by illustrating the way in which older concepts were transformed and adapted to create new meanings in their distinct surroundings.

Borders in the Hittite Empire

The prominence of territorial issues and border delineation in Hittite sources is striking and exceptional. It is beyond the scope of this study to address the question why border descriptions are not as prevalent in other collections of documents in the ancient Near East. With regards to the Hit-

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[1] For a translation of most relevant texts see G. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 2nd ed. (WAW 7), Atlanta 1999.

[2] J.D. Hawkins established the evidence for continuity between the Hittite Empire and the neo-Hittite dynasties in Carchemish and Malatya ("Kuzi-Tešub and the 'Great Kings' of Karkamiš", *AnSt* 38 [1988] 99-108). See discussion by H. G. Güterbock, "Survival of the Hittite Dynasty", in: W.A. Ward / M. Sharp Joukowsky (eds.), *The Crisis Years: The 12th Century B.C. From Beyond the Danube to the Tigris*, Dubuque, Iowa 1992, 53-55. On neo-Hittite art see E. Akurgal, *Kunst der Hethiter*, München 1961, 92-94.

tite Empire it seems that borders fulfilled two purposes, practical and ideological. First, the kings used their power to shift parcels of land from a disobedient vassal to a well-behaved one, an award-punishment strategy that helped them secure dependents' loyalty and promote Hittite interests. A case in point is when Ugarit submitted to Hittite dominion (ca. 1340 B. C.E.). Šuppiluliuma rewarded Niqmadu II, king of Ugarit, by transferring a portion of territory from his northeastern neighbor, the Land of Mukiš to his control. At the same time this land shift served also as a punishment to Mukiš for taking part in a hostile, anti-Hittite Syrian coalition.[3] A generation later, the people of Mukiš turned to the Hittite overlord in an attempt to regain control over their expropriated territories, and Muršili II reexamined the case, and ruled in favor of Ugarit.[4] The Ugarit-Mukiš border dispute demonstrates how exercising exact and imminent territorial control over their subordinates enabled the Hittite rulers to coerce political power efficiently.

The second reason for the preponderance of border issues in Hittite sources is the place of borders in the Hittite conceptions of world order. M. Liverani outlined the ideological aspect of Hittite conceptions of international relationships, pointing to a difference between worldviews of Egyptian and Mesopotamian kings who had aspirations for world dominion, admitting no legitimization for any other power but their own, and between Hittite ideology, reflecting acknowledgement of coexisting equal powers.[5] It is remarkable that even at the height of their power, by their own definition, the Hittites conceived of themselves as only one of the big powers in the world, equal members of the "International Club of World Empires".[6]

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[3] *CTH* 46 = J. Nougayrol, *PRU* IV, pp. 48-52; E. von Schuler, "Vertrag zwischen Suppiluliuma I. und Niqmaddu II. von Ugarit", in: *Rechts- und Wirtschaftsurkunden. Historisch-chronologische Texte* (TUAT I/2), Gütersloh 1983, 131-132; See Beckman, *Diplomatic Texts*, 34-35, §§ 1-2 (historical introduction); § 5 (territorial changes). For the political situation see I. Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit", in: W.G.E. Watson / N. Wyatt (eds.), *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (HdO I/39), Leiden / Boston / Köln 1999, 605-733.

[4] *CTH* 65 = Nougayrol, *PRU* IV, pp. 63-70; Beckman, *Diplomatic Texts*, 174-175. See H. Klengel, *Syria 3000 to 300 B.C.*, Berlin 1992, 137; M.C. Astour, "Les frontières et les districts du royaume d'Ugarit", *UF* 13 (1981) 1-12; Singer, in: *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, 639-640. For the judicial nature of the political and territorial relationships displayed here see M. Liverani, *Prestige and Interest* (HANE/S 1), Padova 1990, 83-84.

[5] See Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 66-86.

[6] For the term "Club of the Great Powers" see H. Tadmor, "The Decline of Empires in Western Asia ca. 1200 B.C.E.", in: F.M. Cross (ed.), *Symposia Celebrating the*

Their sense of commitment to their peers was such that Muršili II listed violations of the Egyptian border in the days of his father Šupiluliuma as one of the causes of the plague afflicting Hatti.[7]

Liverani called the former worldview "one centered", (more accurately dubbed "self-centered"), and the latter "multi-centered". These conceptions of relationships between external political powers, an introverted system versus a reciprocal one, affected also the dealings of the respective kings with internal forces, subordinate rulers of the lands in their domain. In accordance with their self-centered worldview, Egyptian suzerainty, as reflected in the Amarna letters, was never acclaimed by a treaty but through an oath sworn by the vassals alone.[8] The same type of dependence characterized Assyrian vassal relationships in the latter half of the second millennium B.C.E. Subsequent Neo-Assyrian treaties acquired the form of a one-sided unconditioned vow of allegiance on the vassal side (*adê* − itself a term borrowed from Aramaic), with no corresponding obligations on the overlords' side.[9] In contrast, the Hittite worldview gave rise to an attitude of mutual commitment, although of course not of equal status, reflected in Hittite vassal treaties. True, these contracts were unilaterally imposed by the Hittite king. Yet the king regarded himself responsible for his dependent's well being, and issued warnings to subordinates who violated their neighbor's territories even when it did not threaten his rule directly, and the vassal rulers were promised military assistance in case they should be attacked.[10] Local rulers pledged allegiance to the Hittite overlord and had

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Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900-1975), Cambridge, MA. 1979, 3-4. The list of equal ranking kings in the eyes of Tudhaliya IV included the king of Egypt, of Babylonia, of Assyria and of Ahhiyawa, the last name erased on second thought, see C. Kühne / H. Otten, *Der Šaušgamuwa-Vertrag* (StBoT 16), Wiesbaden 1971, 14-15 rev. IV 1-3; Beckman, *Diplomatic Texts*, 106, § 11.

[7] *CTH* 378, ed. by R. Lebrun, *Hymnes et prières hittites*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1980, 2nd Plague Prayer, obv. 13'-20', 33'-46'; translated by A. Goetze in *ANET*, 395.

[8] See H. Tadmor, "Treaty and Oath in the ancient Near East", in: G. M. Tucker / D. A. Knight (eds.), *Humanizing America's Iconic Book*, Chico, California, 1982, 140, and further bibliography there, fn. 71.

[9] Tadmor, *l.c.*, 142-149.

[10] T. Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*, Oxford 1998, 51-53. See Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 76-77. The king's sense of total juridical responsibility for the relationships of the local kings is demonstrated in the explicit words of Muršili II in his treaty with Targašnali king of Hapalla: "If you have any legal dispute, do not act rashly ... I, the king, [will investigate] your legal dispute for you, so that I could set you on the straight path by means of a judgement" (*CTH* 67 = J. Friedrich, *Staatsverträge des*

to perform certain duties, but even after being subjected still regained their sovereignty and received their territories back. Thus Hittite concepts of borders are reflected in their passionate involvement in local territorial issues. The great number of times borders were mentioned in Hittite treaties, royal correspondence and edicts, the high level of geographical knowledge apparent in border descriptions, and the fact that these issues received the attentions of the highest authorities all bear evidence to the Hittite multi-centered worldview.

The Role of Borders in Syro-Anatolian Kingdoms in the 9th-8th Century B.C.E.

When the Assyrian Empire was advancing toward "The Land of Ḥatti", a term designating at this period the area of north-Syria-east-Anatolia,[11] the local kings deemed the prospective overlord responsible for allocating land. The depiction of the overlord as the shifter of territories and setter of borders will be illustrated by excerpts from three documents from this region: two Akkadian steles established by Assyrian rulers around the beginning of the 8th century B.C.E. – the Pazarcık and Antakya steles,[12] and an Aramaic inscription written by a local king around 740 B.C.E. – the Panammuwa inscription.[13]

The Pazarcık stele commemorates the establishment of a new border between Kummuḫ and Gurgum by Adad-nērārī III (810-783 B.C.E.) after he successfully overcame an anti-Assyrian coalition of 8 kings (Pazarcık stele, ll. 7-15). This event is probably connected to his first venture to the west

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Ḥatti-Reiches in hethitischer Sprache I (MVAeG 31/2), Leipzig 1926, 63, § 11, ll. 16-20; Beckman, *Diplomatic Texts*, 72, § 10.) Bryce puts this attitude into political context and maintains that: "One of the chief purposes of the treaties was to isolate the vassal states politically and militarily from one another." (there, p. 52). The ideological framework of Hittite rule complements these political interests.

[11] For the terms employed here and the ethnic-political situation of Syria at this period see J.D. Hawkins, "Assyrians and Hittites", *Iraq* 36 (1974) 68-69; idem, *RlA* IV, s.v. Ḥatti, 152-155.

[12] V. Donbaz, "Two Neo-Assyrian Stelae in the Antakya and Kahramanmaraş Museums", *ARRIMP* 8 (1990) 5-24. For the Pazarcık inscription see also S. Timm, "König Hesion II Von Damascus", *WO* 24 (1993) 56-59.

[13] H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften I*, Wiesbaden 1966, 39-40, no. 215. See also B. Landsberger, *Sam'al. Studien zur Entdeckung der Ruinenstätte Karatepe bei Zencirli*, Ankara 1948, 70; J. C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions II*, Oxford 1975, 80-81.

around 805 B.C.E.:[14]

> In the very year (of the victory) they erected this border-stone (*taḫūmu šuātu*) between Uspilulume, king of the people of Kummuḫ, and Qalparuda, son of Palalam, king of the people of Gurgum. Whoever will take (it) away from the hand of Uspilulume, his sons, (and) his grandsons: may Assur, Marduk, Adad, Sin, (and) Šamaš not stand up (for him in court)[15] at his lawsuit.
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> (Pazarcık stele, ll. 16-22)

The setting of the border is registered in the inscription immediately after the account of the Assyrian victory, implying that the two events are related. Adad-nērārī III is rewarding his loyal protégé, Uspilulume, king of Kummuḫ, "in the very year" (*ina* MU.AN.NA *šá-a-te*,[16] l. 15) of the battle, probably at the expense of Gurgum and the other beaten kings.[17]

On the reverse a second inscription was added. The Assyrian commander-in-chief (*tartānu*), Šamšī-ilu, acting on behalf of Šalmaneser IV (782-772), Adad-nērārī's son and successor, affirmed the land grant. As in the inscription on the obverse, there seems to be a direct relation between the military achievement of the overlord and the land grant, based on an adverbial clause of time: "On my return (*ina ta-a-a-ár-ti-ia*, i.e. from Damascus) I gave this border-stone to Uspilulume, king of the people of Kummuḫ" (ll. 11-13a).[18] Since Damascus is far from the territory of Kummuḫ and in this case there can be no direct cause − effect relationship between the two events, we should perhaps interpret this phrase in light of a more general model. The affirmation of the land grant to the king of Kummuḫ is seen as a reward for his loyalty contrasted to the defiant behavior of the king of Damascus. The sovereign's right to determine subordinate's bound-

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[14] Arpad, the leader of the Syrian coalition in the Pazarcık stele, was defeated in 805 according to the Eponym Chronicle (*RlA* 2, 429; A. R. Millard / H. Tadmor, "Adad-Nirari III in Syria: Another Stele Fragment and the Dates of his Campaigns", *Iraq* 35 [1973] 57-64). For a map see R. Lamprichs, *Die Westexpansion des neuassyrischen Reiches* (AOAT 239), Kevelaer / Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995.

[15] For the legal connotation of the verb *izuzzu* and its biblical cognate *qwm* see J.J. Rabinowitz, *VT* 11 (1961) 59-61 (he renders the verb as *nazâzu*; for the form of this Akkadian verb see J. Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, Atlanta, Georgia 1997, 450-452).

[16] For other occasions of this formula cf. *CAD* Š/II, 202, s.v. *šattu* 1e. For the connecting role of the temporal clause see also Timm, *WO* 24, 62; 67; 71.

[17] On the consistent loyalty of Kummuḫ to Assyria since the ninth century see Hawkins, *Iraq* 36, 80.

[18] The Assyrian attack on Damascus is dated to 773, according to its mention in the eponym list, see J.D. Hawkins, CAH III/1, 399-401; Klengel, *Syria 3000 to 300 B.C.*, 201. For Šamšī-ilu see A.K. Grayson, "Assyrian Officials and Power in the Ninth and Eighth Centuries", *SAAB* 7 (1993) 27.

aries therefore precisely stems from his position as the dominant suzerain, conqueror of rebel lands and protector of allies.

The second stele established by Adad-nērārī III and his commander-in-chief in this region, the Antakya stele, records border revisions between two other Syrian kingdoms, Arpad and Hammath. Unlike the Pazarcık stele, which displays cuneiform style of poor quality and lacks horizontal lines on both sides, the Antakya stele was beautifully carved.[19] The difference may be due to the importance of the kingdom of Arpad, formerly a ringleader of enemies (the Pazarcık stela l. 11), now an ally. The Antakya stele was erected following a military campaign conducted in the year 796 B.C.E.[20]

Like the Pazarcık stele, which was directed to the king of Kummuḫ alone though referring to the two kings, the Antakya stele was a monumental inscription issued to one of the parties, Atar\u0161umki the Arpadian, commemorating entitlement to a parcel of land. It was set up for display to ensure that the entitlement was permanent and hereditary and to refute potential future claims.

The Impact of Hittite Border Ideology and Terminology on Syro-Anatolian Kingdoms

The similarity of political customs recalled in the neo-Assyrian border-stones from southeast Anatolia to former Hittite ways of dealing with border issues is striking. The steles show that during the neo-Assyrian expansion to the north-west, border divisions fulfilled a similar practical role to the one they had in the Hittite system of government. The concept of shifting parcels of land between local rulers, awarding one at the expense of another, is similar to the way Hittite kings dealt with kingdoms in their domain. 550 years after Šupiluliuma and his son, Muršili II, had determined boundaries of Syrian dependent lands, Adad-nērārī III and his son, Šalmaneser IV acted in this area in a similar way.

The actual act of setting stones when establishing the new status of a territory in question is also reminiscent of Hittite practices in this very area. We learn about this practice from a short paragraph in one of Muršili's verdicts regarding the prolonged border dispute of the kingdom of Ugarit

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[19]   Donbaz, *ARRIMP* 8, 5, and there, fn. 6.

[20]   See J. D. Hawkins, CAH III/1, p. 400; S. Ponchia, *L'Assiria e gli stati transeufratici nella prima metà dell'VIII sec. a.C.* (HANE/S 4), Padova 1991, 46, 49; M. Weippert, "Die Feldzüge Adadnararis III. nach Syrien. Voraussetzungen, Verlauf, Folgen", *ZDPV* 108 (1992) 58-59.

with its southern neighbor, Siyannu, in which the Hittite king became re-markably involved. The king showed how the border was marked:

> He (referring to the *Uriyannu* priest) selected the areas between the king of Uga-rit and the king of Siyannu, and established stones in the borders between them.[21]

Although none of the Hittite stones had been found to this day, this source clearly shows that Hittite border stones were established in Syria. A point of literary similarity is the way the area included in the grant was defined. In the Antakya stele this area is determined:

> ᵘʳᵘ*Naḥlasi adi eqlētišu kirâtišu u dimātišu gabbe ša* ᵐ*Ataršumki šūtu*
> The town of Naḥlasi with all its fields, gardens and settlements, belongs to Atar-šumki (ll. 6b-7a).

This literary form is similar to how the Hittite king defined the territory of former Mukiš, which was entrusted to Ugarit. After enumerating the cit-ies allotted to Ugarit he specifies that:

> *pātānišu qadu eqli ugārišunu [ḫursānišunu ālāni]šunu ana* ᵐ*Niqmaddi [Šar māt* ᵘʳᵘ*Ugarit] ittadin šunūti*
> He gave his border districts to Niqmaddu, king of the land of Ugarit, together with their fields, [their mountains], (and) their [cities].[22]

These similarities derive from a comparable historical situation resolved according to the common custom. They also reflect a heritage of practices and worldviews regarding the role of the overlord in decreeing matters of borders between vassal kingdoms. They demonstrate a tradition of common language conventions in defining land tracts.

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[21]   *ù* ZAGᵐᵉˢ *i-na be-ri* LUGAL KUR ᵘʳᵘ*U-ga-ri-it ù i-na be-ri* LUGAL KUR ᵘʳᵘ*Sí-ia-an-ni is-sí-iq-qá-an* NA₄ᵐᵉˢ *i-na* ZAGᵐᵉˢ *i-na be-ri-šu-nu il-ta-ka-an* RS 17.368, V° 6'-8' (J. Nougayrol, *PRU* IV, p. 77; cf. M.C. Astour, "The Kingdom of Siyannu-Ušnatu", *UF* 11 (1979) 23; Singer, in: *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, 685. For the political situation see there, 662 ff.).

[22]   *CTH* 65 = Nougayrol, *PRU* IV, 67, ll. 27'-30'; Beckman, *Diplomatic Texts*, 175, § 4. This was also the way Ugaritian kings used to designate sovereignty over regions under their jurisdiction. The city was transferred: *qadu gabbi mimmi šumšīša* − together with all that it has, a term presumably referring to fields and water sources (see J. Nougayrol, *PRU* III, Paris 1955, p. 146, RS 16.153, ll. 4-5; M. Heltzer, *The Rural Community in Ancient Ugarit*, Wiesbaden 1976, 48.). See also the description of the territory of Telaim in the Aramaic stele from Sefire: ותלאי[ם וכפריה ובעליה וגבלה לאבי ול ⁽²⁴⁾[ביתה עד] עלם And Tela'im and its villages and its landlords and its territory to my father and [his house for] ever (Donner and Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäi-sche Inschriften I*, 45, no. 224, 1. 23-24; O. Rössler, "Aramäische Staatsverträge", in: *Rechts- und Wirtschaftsurkunden. Historisch-chronologische Texte* [TUAT I/2], Güters-loh 1983, 188).