

ANATOLIA AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE

1. The Hittite Empire collapsed at the beginning of the 12th century B.C. The exact date of the end of the Hittite Empire is not known. However, evidence from Ugarit leads us to believe that this city, which was politically dependent upon the Hittites, fell on account of an enemy attack in the second decade of the 12th century (see Singer 1999, pp. 729-730; Freu 2006, pp. 228-234). No texts from Ugarit that are known to us hint at the collapse of Ḫatti. This would, therefore, lead us to believe that the Hittite Empire collapsed either at the same time or at a later stage than the destruction of Ugarit (see Freu 1998, p. 28). Even the nearby city of Emar appears to have been destroyed in this very same period.¹

Until a few years ago scholars believed that even the Hittite capital, Ḫattuša, had suffered an enemy attack (e.g. Klengel 1999, pp. 312-313). Digs, carried out over the last few years, however, have changed the picture of events that had taken place at the beginning of the 12th century B.C. J. Seeher (1998, pp. 515-523; Id. 2001, pp. 623-634) has revealed that, actually, there are no evident traces of an attack upon the city or of a systematic and contemporary destruction of its buildings.

The hypothesis that seems most likely to us today is the one relating to the abandoning of the city on the part of the Court at the time of the last Hittite king known to us, Šuppiluliuma II. It is believed that temple furnishings, luxury goods and some of the royal archives' more recent documents were taken away (see Seeher 2001, pp. 623-634). However, we know neither where the Court moved nor why Ḫattuša was abandoned.

The abandoning of Ḫattuša might have been due to strategic, political or religious reasons. As far as the first hypothesis is concerned we do not know where the enemy attack that the Hittites feared was supposedly to come from. It would hardly appear very feasible, though, that Ḫatti feared an attack by the "Sea Peoples" right up into the heart of Anatolia. Furthermore, as has been said, Ḫattuša does not bear any traces of destruction and so, therefore, it does not seem to have undergone any sort of attack. The departure of the Court from Ḫattuša, therefore, might have been merely the last stage in a slow process of disintegration of royal authority and central power. This process had begun with Ḫattušili III's *coup d'état* and had become more marked over the following decades (see now Hawkins 2002, pp. 143-151).

On the other hand, if Ḫattuša had not suffered from enemy attack, Late Bronze Age levels in other centres in Anatolia show clear signs of destruction. Some centres in south-eastern Turkey

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¹ See MARGUERON 1993, p. 85; see also the literature quoted in ADAMTHWAITE 2001, p. XIX, note 20. A different point of view is supported by Adamthwaite, *ibid.*, who dates the destruction of Emar at the end of the 13th century B.C.

underwent destruction and terrible fires, like at Kilise-tepe (Hansen, Postgate 1999, p. 112), Tarsus and Mersin (Jean 2003, pp. 82, 83), for example. This appears understandable since this region was exposed to the incursions of the “Sea Peoples” more than central Anatolia was. In central Anatolia we come across situations which differ from site to site. For example, Gordion does not seem to show any traces of destruction. This is not the case of Kuşaklı where some monumental buildings (Period III) were destroyed by fire (see Müller-Karpe 1996, p. 79; Id. 2004, pp. 108-111).

2. Returning to the subject of the Hittite capital, the knowledge that was available until only a few years ago concerning Ḫattuša led us to believe that for approximately three hundred years after the collapse of the Hittite Empire this town was no longer inhabited (e.g. Bittel 1983, p. 37).

However, excavations undertaken in the north-eastern part of Ḫattuša, at Büyükkaya, from 1996 onwards, have completely transformed this picture.

At Büyükkaya in the area of the Silos 8 and 9, which date to the Late Hittite Imperial Age, a stratigraphic sequence with three Early Iron Age phases is preserved. The earlier level of the Early Iron Age, which is on the Hittite silos, is sealed by buildings of the middle phase of Early Iron Age. Radiocarbon places Early Iron Age phases between the 12th and the 10th century B.C. (Genz 2000, pp. 35-54; Id. 2004, pp. 46-47; see also Seeher 2006, p. 67).

The earlier phase of the Early Iron Age sequence is documented by few architectonic traces (holes for the placing of wooden poles) and by pottery. This pottery is two-thirds hand-made and a third wheel-made. The use of the potter’s wheel and the typically Hittite shapes of some vessels are a clue to the continuity of the previous traditions (see Genz 2004a, p. 24). Since the survival of the Hittite traditions are only to be recognized in the most ancient phase of the Early Iron Age and not in the following phases we can hypothesize that this phase comes immediately after the final phase of the Hittite empire (see Genz 2004a, p. 37).

The ceramic wares of the period are limited to simple utilitarian forms; we do not find any more large storage vessels, like *pithoi* for the preservation of cereals. The impression is to be had of a Hittite capital which is no longer a great administrative centre and whose population has been reduced to a living of basic household economy (see Schoop 2003, p. 173).

To our knowledge at the moment this earlier phase of the Early Iron Age does not appear to be documented in any other site outside Ḫattuša (see Genz 2004a, p. 26). The precise date of Kuşaklı period IV, level 1b, seems to be still an object for discussion. This period, which follows the destruction of the site, is believed by A. Müller-Karpe (1996, p. 79; Id. 1997; Id. 2004, p. 110) to be of the same age as the earlier phase of Ḫattuša’s Early Iron Age: it shows similar characteristics to those of the Hittite capital since there is a partial reutilization of the ruins of earlier monumental buildings for living purposes as well as both hand-made and wheel-made ceramic wares. Differently H. Genz (2004a, p. 26 and note 145), in the light of studies upon Ḫattuša ceramic wares from the older Early Iron Age phase, believes that level IV 1b of Kuşaklı still belongs to the Hittite Imperial Age.

The Middle and Late Early Iron Age phases are better documented in Anatolia. These phases are preserved in sites like Alaca Höyük, Eskiypar, Kaman-Kalehöyük, Kilise Tepe, Tarsus, Gordion and Troy (see Genz 2004a, pp. 26-28; cf. Id. 2003, pp. 179-191).

The mentioned sites are not new settlements, but were urban centres of a certain importance in the Hittite age even though one cannot exclude the existence of newly-founded cities which have still to be identified by archaeologists (see Genz 2003, p. 179).

A situation of general impoverishment is recognizable in many of these sites. This appears, for example, from the analysis of faunal remains. At *Ḫattuša* and also at *Kaman-Kalehöyük* the number of slaughtered cattle diminished whereas the amount of pigs and sheep slaughtered increased. Furthermore, animals were slaughtered at an older age.² Another example is given to us by the coastal site of *Kinet Höyük* since here during the Bronze Age (phases 14-13) a consistent part of food was made up of large fish which were presumably fished in open sea by professional fishermen. However, in the following phases – phase 13.2 (“sub-Hittite”) and phase 12 (Iron Age: see Gates 2006, p. 304) – faunal remains show the passing from a maritime economy to an essentially agricultural one (see Ikram 2003, pp. 283-293). This might have been due to either ethnical or social motivations. However, it is possible that the general crisis situation all over the eastern Mediterranean as well as the fall of the Hittite kingdom could have made more difficult, if not impossible, the practice of fishing in high seas for the *Kinet Höyük* community.

A further effect of the collapse of the Hittite kingdom and the disappearance of a central authority over the whole area of Anatolia was also the breaking up of a cultural and political unity.

Examination of the ceramic wares from Anatolian sites of the middle and late phases of the Early Iron Age enables us to advance some observations upon this point. With the Early Iron Age the substantial homogeneity of the Hittite ceramic wares was broken. In the Hittite Age, in central-northern and southern Anatolia, reaching as far west as *Beycesultan*, the ceramic wares were completely homogeneous (see Seeher 2005, pp. 38-39). On the contrary, in this same geographical region in the Early Iron Age there were autonomous traditions in areas that were even quite close to each other (see Genz 2004a, pp. 26-28; cf. Id. 2003, pp. 179-191).

The only common characteristic in all Anatolian pottery belonging to this period is the fact that it was hand-made.

Now let us take a close look at the recognizable traditions in pottery. Starting off from *Ḫattuša*, even from the middle phase of the Early Bronze Age onwards any echo of Hittite traditions disappears. New shapes and new decorations appear (Genz 2004a, pp. 24-26; cf. Id. 2000, p. 181). The pottery of the Hittite capital show very distinct similarities to those ceramic wares of the sites within the area of the *River Kızılırmak* (Genz 2000, p. 187; Id. 2004a, pp. 39-44), until *Amasiya* and still further north to *Samsun*, as shown in the surveys carried out by M. Özsaıt (see lastly Özsaıt 2003, pp. 199-212).

H. Genz (2000, p. 187; Id. 2004a, pp. 39-44) writes that the shapes and the decorative elements of these ceramic wares can be compared to those in the pre-Hittite pottery of the Early and Middle Bronze Age of Central Anatolia. This could find an explanation in the supposition that, following the collapse of the Hittite empire and the disappearance of the pottery workshops that produced a standard-type pottery, the new dimension of household economy encouraged the production of pottery that was characterized by its retrieval of older traditions. It is, therefore, believed that these traditions survived in parts of the population that had remained on the edges of society in the Hittite Age and who were able to emerge in this new phase. On the other hand, no clearly foreign elements can be recognized.

Examination of the Anatolian ceramic wares of the Middle and Late phases of the Early Iron Age carried out by H. Genz (2004a, pp. 26-28) leads this scholar to single out other zones, a part from

² See VON DEN DRIESCH, PÖLLATH 2003, pp. 295-299 (for the Hittite capital); HONGO 2003, pp. 257-269 (for *Kaman-Kalehöyük*).

the area within the River Kızılırmak, that is: 1) a western zone documented by the materials from Gordion, 2) a south-eastern zone extending from Kaman-Kalehöyük to Tarsus, 3) a south-western zone documented by the materials from Kilise-Tepe.

The cultural fragmentation of Anatolia after the collapse of the Hittite empire is an understandable phenomenon if we consider the morphology of the area of Anatolia where natural barriers like larger or smaller mountain chains separated one area from another and made communications difficult. Furthermore, even in the Hittite Age's kingdom there was a mosaic of different cultures and traditions, although united by their belonging to the same political entity, even though during the final phase, in peripheral areas like Tarḫuntašša and in western Anatolia, there was a tendency to political autonomy.³

3. In Ḫatti's kingdom during the Late Bronze Age there was little importing of pottery. Until a relatively short time ago spindle bottles and arm-shaped vessels, that is red lustrous wheel-made ware, were considered to be of Cypriot origin (see Eriksson 1993). Recent studies on this pottery that in the last years has been found in large amounts in one of the southern pounds of the "Upper City" of Ḫattuša tell us today that it is not certain whether it was imported from Cyprus or it was produced in south-eastern Anatolia (Knappett 2000; Mielke 2007).

Even the Mycenaean pottery found in Late Bronze Age archaeological contexts is limited to few pieces if one takes into account the central and southern areas of Anatolia in which it was found. Mycenaean pottery was concentrated in the sites in western Anatolia (Özgünel 1996; Genz 2004b, pp. 77-84).

During the Early Iron Age, Mycenaean style ware (LH IIIC) appears in large quantities in some sites in Cilicia and, above all, in Tarsus (more than 800 pieces) (French 1975, pp. 53-75; Slane 1987, pp. 464-466; Yakar 1993, pp. 14-18). According to J. Yakar the large presence of LH IIIC pottery in Cilicia can be related to the fact that the Hittites no longer had control over the southern Anatolian coast (Yakar 2006, pp. 39-40).

Regarding this, I think it would be interesting to mention two letters from Ugarit that have been very recently published by S. Lackenbacher and F. Malbran-Labat (2005, pp. 227-240). These two letters come from the Urtenu archive and both were sent to the last king of Ugarit, Ammurapi. The sender of the letter Rs 94.2523 was a Hittite dignitary called Penti-Šarruma, whilst the sender of the other letter, Rs 94.2530, was the Hittite king (one may presume Šuppiluliuma II). In a passage in these letters we read of "food rations" (PAD^{MES})⁴ to deliver to the Ḫiyawa settled in the region of Lukka (= Lycia). I agree with S. Lackenbacher and F. Malbran-Labat in believing that the term *Ḫiyawa* is the same as *Aḫḫiyawa* in Hittite sources. This would lead us to believe that at the end of the 13th century or at the beginning of the 12th century Mycenaean peoples were to be found in Lycia and that they were in the service of the Hittite kingdom (since they seem to receive food rations), even though we do not know what they actually did (workforce or mercenaries?⁵).

³ See the inscription of Hatip and the impressions of seals of Kurunta king of Tarḫuntašša, where he bears the imperial title "Great King", and the text KBo XVIII 18 in which a king of Mira bears the title "Great King", see HAWKINS 1998, pp. 20-21; DE MARTINO 2006, p. 173.

⁴ For a different interpretation of this logogram see SINGER 2006, pp. 252-258.

⁵ Singer (2006, pp. 250-258) thinks that the Ḫiyawa of these two letters are merchants.

In my opinion it is possible that these two letters allude to a phenomenon which could have had larger proportions than we are able to reconstruct, that is the arrival of groups of Mycenaean along the coasts of Anatolia during the period following on the collapse of Mycenaean Kingdoms. This would fit in with the context of the move which brought Mycenaean peoples into various areas of eastern Mediterranean (see Borgna 2006, p. 260).

We do not know from Hittite sources whether at the time of Šuppiluliuma II Ḫatti still had a political control of the land of Lukka;⁶ from this text it seems that Hittites either had some authority on this region or wanted to regain it also using troops of mercenaries. It can be presumed that after the collapse of Ḫatti Empire refugees from the Aegean were able to occupy larger areas of the southern coast of Turkey.

Mycenaean style pottery has been found in Troy. In this site, in the VIIb2 phase, the so-called “Buckelkeramik” or Knobbed Ware began to appear. This is a common feature also in Thrace and in Bulgaria (see *e.g.* Becks 2004, p. 49). Independently from the problem whether these ceramic wares were imported or locally produced (see Becks 2004, pp. 51-52; see also Zimmermann 2006), its presence in Troy is the clue we have to close contacts with south-eastern Europe or, even, a clue to the presence of peoples actually hailing from this region.

The hand-made pottery of Gordion (Phase YHSS 7) is thought to be similar to the Knobbed Ware of Troy (*e.g.* Sams 1992, pp. 58-59); M.M. Voigt and R.C. Henrickson (2000, pp. 37-54) believe that these ceramic wares are the clue to the arrival in Gordion of groups coming from the West. However, this hypothesis is not shared by H. Genz (2004a, pp. 185-186). This scholar states that the similarity between the Gordion ceramics and those of Troy is merely superficial. Furthermore, according to H. Genz, the appearance in Gordion of new ceramic types is not necessarily due to migratory phenomenon. On the contrary this could find an explanation in the long gap (around a century) that separated in Gordion the Late Bronze Age levels from those of the Early Iron Age (Voigt, Henrickson 2000, p. 41).

4. To sum up, it can be hypothesized that at the beginning of the 12th century the Hittite capital was abandoned by the king and the Court. People continued living in Ḫattuša, even though the loss of the city's importance and its progressive economic impoverishment are recognizable from the archaeological evidence of this period (Seeher 1998, pp. 515-523).

The collapse of the Hittite empire caused a situation of economic and political crisis in most of Anatolia. With the collapse of the centralized Hittite administrative system the political and cultural unity of the country was broken. Many of the Hittite cities in central and southern Anatolia survived even though in simpler ways of living.

In central Anatolia, that is in the region which had made up the nucleus of Ḫatti's empire, almost nothing of Hittite tradition remains. On the other hand, this tradition is present, although in different forms, in peripheral areas of Anatolia.

In southern Anatolia the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions of Kizildağ and Karadağ preserve the name of a King Ḫartapu, son of Muršili; this king bears the imperial Hittite titles. These inscriptions are dated by D. Hawkins to the 12th century.⁷ They are evidence of the survival of

⁶ On Lukka in Hittite time, see RAIMOND 2004, pp. 93-146.

⁷ See HAWKINS 1992, pp. 259-275; for a different date of these inscription (at the end of the 13th century) see SINGER 1996, pp. 68-71.

a potentate, perhaps the continuation of the reign of Tarḫuntašša from the 13th century King Ḫartapu presented himself as the heir to the Hittite dynasty and its political tradition.

In 1995 a biconvex bronze seal was found among deposits of Troy VIIb, which bears a Luwian hieroglyphic inscription. The date of the archaeological context in which the seal was found, that is, Troy VIIb 1 or b 2, is still the object of discussion (see Hawkins, Easton 1996, pp. 111-118). The preservation of a Luwian hieroglyphic seal in Troy from the 12th century is the clue that within the *élite* of this site the memory of the Hittite tradition still persisted.

Lastly, a stone seal with hieroglyphic signs of Luwian inspiration was found in the excavations at Metropolis, on the acropolis, in a byzantine level. Since the inscription does not contain real signs in Hieroglyphic Luwian, but only signs inspired by it, A. Schachner and R. Meriç (2000, pp. 85-102) suggest a 12th century date, that is following the collapse of the Hittite empire. This date is supported, according to the two scholars, by the comparison between the shape of the Metropolis seal and of other seals coming from archaeological contexts in Greece and the Aegean, which can be dated to the 12th century (Schachner, Meriç 2000, p. 92).

The region where Metropolis lies was part of the kingdom of Mira during the Hittite Age. This kingdom had been a subordinate of Ḫatti and it had been strongly connected to through political and dynastic links. The finding of this seal would suggest that in this region, in a following age to the collapse of the Hittite empire, a trace of the economic and administrative structure of the previous age still survived.

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