

FEDERICO MANUELLI, *Arslantepe. Late Bronze Age. Hittite Influence and local Traditions in an Eastern Anatolian Community*. Arslantepe IX, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome 2013, pp. 490. ISBN 978-88-904240-3-8.

This extremely thorough and comprehensive study constitutes the volume IX of the planned final publications of the Arslantepe Series and deals with all material remains of Late Bronze Age (LBA) Arslantepe, the ancient city of Malatya. It bases on the PhD thesis of the author, which was submitted at Trieste University under the supervision of Stefano De Martino and Marcella Frangipane, but includes also further contributions of other authors. The book is well structured and published in extremely high quality.

An Italian and an English foreword by the editor of the series and excavation director, M. Frangipane, is followed by acknowledgements of the author and an introduction, which includes some theoretical and historical remarks and stresses problems, purposes and limitations of the research.

Chapter I introduces “Arslantepe, The Site and its Environment: The Sequence and the Investigations On The Historical Levels”. Chapter II “The Late Bronze Age Sequence: Excavations and Remains” describes the “Excavation Procedures, Collection of Materials and Methods of Analysis” and the “Archaeological Sequence of the North-Eastern Sector” as well as the “South-Western Area”.

The most substantial Chapter III “The Late Bronze Age Pottery Assemblages” comprises approximately a quarter of the book and presents the ceramics, on which most of the following arguments are based. It consists of subchapters on “Recording Methodology and General Characteristics of the Production” (Sampling, Recording and Study Choices; Manufacturing Techniques and General Features of the Arslantepe LBA Pottery), “Ware Classes Description and Macroscopic Determination”, “Archaeometric Analysis”, written by G. Bozzetti, A. Buccolieri, A. Serra, “Typological Classification” (Methodology and Purposes of Pottery Typology, Criteria of Classification, Typology: A Summary, Typological Description and Frequencies), and “The Arslantepe Late Bronze Age Ceramic Repertoire: A Critical Outline”.

Chapter IV is dedicated to “Craft Activities” like “Metalwork” (Weapons and Tools, Ornaments), “Textile Production: Notes on Spinning and Weaving Tools”, written by R. Laurito, “Macro-Lithic Tools: Technological and Functional Analysis”, by C. Lemorini, and “Miscellaneous Objects” (Bone and Antler, Clay, Stone, Beads). Chapter V is written by C. Mora and discusses “Seals and Seal Impressions”, Chapter VI “Animal Husbandry” is a contribution by L. Bartosiewicz, S. Bökönyi and G. Siracusano.

The first of four interpreting and evaluating chapters, Chapter VII, deals with “Distribution and Quantification of the Materials in their Contexts: A Functional Analysis”, the following Chapter VIII is dedicated the “Chronology” and discusses in a methodological introduction “Ceramic Sequences and Chronological Indicators”, describes “Stratigraphy, Seriation and Relative Chronology” and offers results of “Stratigraphy and Seriation of the South-Western Settlement” and the “Pottery Sequence Development in North-Eastern Sector”, and gives “Data and Stratigraphic Comparison: The LBA Relative Chronology at Arslantepe” before the results of the “Absolute Chronology”, based on C14-Dating, are summarized.

Chapter IX “Arslantepe and the Anatolian World” analyses “Similarities and Dissimilarities: Geographical and temporal Connections of the Arslantepe Pottery Repertoire”, “Spatial Analysis and Reconstruction of the Interaction Degree” (Arslantepe and the Hittite World, Relations with other Areas and the Upper Euphrates Region: Local Tradition and Innovations) and “Some Remarks on the Anatolian Late Bronze Age as seen from the Perspective of the Arslantepe Sequence”. The final Chapter X “Hittite Influence and Local Developments in the Euphrates Valley during the Late Bronze Age” discusses “Hittite Imperialism and Periphery Administration: An Archaeological and Historical Assessment”, “Architectural Development, Domestic Installations and Settlement Organization in the 2nd Millennium Upper Euphrates”, “Spheres of Interaction along the Euphrates Valley during the Late Bronze Age”, “Malatya in Hittite Texts: Historical Background and Comparison with Archaeological Data”, and “The Upper Euphrates Boundary and Beyond: A Final Data Evaluation. Towards an Understanding of the Eastern Frontier of the Hittite Empire”.

The study is closed by a Turkish Summary and the Bibliography.

The present book is an extraordinarily valuable synthesis on the important settlement at the eastern margins of the Hittite Empire. It reveals a very systematic typology and evaluation of the pottery, representing the highest standard and modern state-of-art of ceramic studies, including multivariate seriations. Moreover, it gives a very good presentation of the stratigraphy and architecture of the site as well as of the handcraft products deriving from the relevant levels. The reader easily gets a very profound and comprehensive insight into the material culture of a thoroughly and extensively investigated urban settlement of that period. But the book is much more than just a summary and overview on the site, presenting just an internal analysis of the local material – which would be of value enough! Additionally, it offers an extremely thorough and theory-based discussion and interpretation of the political and cultural processes behind the material: How is political domination or cultural affinity reflected by material production? How can the attested connections be explained? How much was Malatya a “Hittite” city in terms of cultural features rather than ethnic constellations?

There are many points and statements of the book that provoke controversial discussions, e.g. the question on how much standardization of ceramic production and sealing practices did reflect just a political adjustment of elites and administrative organs rather than a deeper acculturation of the population. It also stimulates further comparisons: Do the mentioned indications of an administrative “Hittitization” correspond with similar features of an “Assyrianization”, being visible in the contemporary assemblages in Upper Mesopotamia under Middle Assyrian domination? And why does the situation in Malatya differ so much from the one in the Hittite vassal states south of the Taurus, even just a little bit downstream the Euphrates? Strangely enough the Taurus and the Amanus respectively (since Kizzuwatna shows similar features than Malatya) did not form a political boundary at least during the Hittite Imperial Period but nevertheless a cultural one.

It is impossible to discuss all these issues here, but one of the major values of the book is its potential as a starting point for many interregional comparisons and analyses.

However, there are some few weak points to be mentioned here. They mainly

concern chronology and the misunderstanding terminologies used here. It already starts with the definition of "Late Bronze Age": Obviously the author uses this term more or less synonym for "Hittite", initiated by the emergence of the Hittite Old Kingdom in the 18th or 17th century and terminated by the collapse of the Hittite Empire in the early 12th century BCE. However, even this problematic definition is not followed consequently. Why, for example, is on the one hand the publication of a stele of PUGNUS-mili presented here, a ruler of the post-imperial "Neo-Hittite" Period of the 11th century (pp. 272-274), and on the other hand of some seals being considered "pre-Imperial" (p. 257, does that mean "pre-Hittite"?), hence presumably enlarging the chronological scope into the very early second millennium BC. The definition of Late Bronze Age as equivalent with "Hittite" is quite common in Central Anatolia, where "Middle Bronze Age" is often reduced to the period of the Assyrian *kārum*-trade system. But already in Cilicia and the regions at the Middle Euphrates just a little bit downstream from Malatya, other lines are drawn for the definition of the Middle-Late Bronze Age transition. And this is mostly true for Northern Levant and Upper Mesopotamia, where the beginning of Late Bronze Age is defined by the destruction of the Old Syrian Kingdom of Yamḥad and the termination of the Old Babylonian Empire caused by Muṣṣili I, hence defining the Old Hittite Period as part of the terminal Middle Bronze Age rather than of the early Late Bronze Age. Readers who are more familiar with these definitions might be slightly confused by the different definition proposed here.

Chronology in general bases on various aspects: historical consideration, development of material culture, namely architecture and pottery, urban developments etc. Transition lines between two periods being defined by modern scholars are somehow artificial and become more and more unsharp the more criteria are taken into account. Do we deal only with changes of material culture like ceramics? Or do we include important political events as well? Both do not necessarily coincide. However, the Metal Age terminology implements a rather material-based definition, but also reflecting stages of social development. In this respect it makes it even more confusing that Central Anatolia is considered to have reached the Late Bronze Age stage earlier than Northern Levant or Upper Mesopotamia, contrary to the general degree of cultural and urbanistic development of the two regions. However, modern scholars using chronological terminologies and definitions are too often prisoners of conventions.

It is definitely well justified to draw different transition lines for each region. If in Malatya the material of the *kārum* Period differs more significantly from the one of the Hittite dominated Period afterwards than it is the case between the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom remains, then this difference should be reflected in the used terminology as well. But since the situation is completely different even in the neighbouring regions, the usage of the same terminologies with diverse meanings causes confusion. The author is well aware of the different implementations of the same terminology in various regions: He repeatedly synchronizes various chronologies (pp. 357, 358, 394) but even here the changing usage of "Middle" and "Late Bronze Age" makes it sometimes difficult to follow. It would have been of great help to reject a terminology, which seems to be well known to everybody but has completely different

associations and connotations to everybody, and replace it rather with a regional chronology, equivalent to the ARCANE system.

However, this is just a minor aspect compared with the overall and extremely high value of the book. In times facing a flood of publications of either unreflected material presentations or of anthropological studies lacking any solid material-based arguments, it became rare to see books with such convincing cultural and historical statements based on very thorough and comprehensive material analysis.

We thus have to congratulate and thank the author and the whole project in behind for having offered such an important contribution on the Anatolian archaeology of the Hittite period!

Mirko Novak
Universität Bern
Institut für Archäologische Wissenschaften
Abteilung für Vorderasiatische Archäologie
novak@iaw.unibe.ch