

SCHACHNER, A. — Hattuscha. Auf der Suche nach dem sagenhaften Großreich der Hethiter. Verlag C.H. Beck, München, 2011. (22 cm, 364). ISBN 978-3-406-60504-8. € 34,-.

The ancient ruins of the city now known as Hattusa near the modern Turkish village of Boghazköy in Central Anatolia have fascinated western academics since their discovery in 1834. Due to the sheer size and monumentality of the ruins, they were initially identified by some as the remains of Pteria –which is mentioned in Herodotos as the site of a battle between King Croesus of Lydia and Cyrus the Great– and by others as Tavium (an important Celtic centre in Galatia). It was only after the discovery in 1906 of various clay tablets bearing Akkadian and –as it later transpired– Hittite inscriptions, that the site was identified as Hattusa; the capital of the Hittites. Nine years later, in 1915, the Czech linguist Friedrich Hrozný deciphered the Hittite language, thus identifying the earliest attested Indo-European language. Since 1906, German archaeological teams have continued (with interruptions) to excavate in the area of Boghazköy, dramatically improving our understanding of both Hattusa's cityscape and its role in the Hittite world.

The book that is under review here is written by the current director of the excavations, Andreas Schachner, and offers a synthesis of more than a century of scholarship on Hattusa. In this reader's opinion, the scope and ambition of the book puts it in a class of its own: Schachner presents the latest discussions and insights on the origins and position of Hattusa in the Hittite world in an accessible and succinct way, introducing Hattusa not only as a creation of the Hittite state, but also as a monument to human settlement pitched against the limits of the harsh natural environment of Central Anatolia.

The greater part of the book is organised in a more or less chronological way, focusing on the development of Hattusa through the ages (from a fairly 'standard' Anatolian town in the Early and Middle Bronze Age through a period of greatness as a metropolis at the heart of the Hittite Empire in the Late Bronze Age, to the period of decline and (brief) revival during the Iron Age), although Schachner also devotes attention to related themes, such as the place of Hattusa in what has been dubbed (cf. Amanda Podany, *Brotherhood of Kings*, 2011) an 'International Age' in Chapter VII (Hattusa und die Ostmediterrane Staatenwelt der Spätbronzezeit), the history of archaeological research at Boghazköy (in Chapters II and X) and the environmental setting (highlighted in Chapter III, although the theme recurs throughout the book). Due to the vast scope of Schachner's 'Hattuscha', it is impossible to dwell on all these topics: this review will instead focus on the chapters on the development of the city.

Chapter IV ('Vom Dorf zur Stadt') surveys the early development of Hattusa, from its humble Neolithic origins to the urban centre that it became during the Early and Middle Bronze Age. Excavations by the Boghazköy expedition at Büyükkaya and Yarikkaya, as well as recent excavations by Ulf-Dietrich Schoop and his team at nearby Çamlıbel Tarlası, have demonstrated that the first sedentary populations in the region of Boghazköy date back at least to the fifth millennium BC. These early settlements were a rather modest affair; consisting of a small number of rectangular structures, usually situated close to perennial streams. They appear to have been inhabited only briefly; possibly as a result of overexploitation

of the local surroundings, which forced the inhabitants to regularly relocate. The exact extent of the intensive exploitation of the natural environment has only recently been realised, with the discovery of several primitive but efficient (copper) smelting facilities. In addition to the locally available resources, evidence from Çamlıbel Tarlası indicates that these early settlements were already part of a trading network that stretched to the Sea of Marmara and the coastal regions of northern Anatolia.

Due to the transitory nature of the earliest settlements in the Boghazköy area, it is difficult to establish a firm chronology or clarify the relation between the various sites in the area. The relation between these early settlements and the more sizable settlement that covered area generally known as the ‘Altstadt’ during the final centuries of the 3rd millennium BC, unfortunately, also remains unclear. The evidence, Schachner notes (p.51), seems to suggest a ‘Neugründung’. By the end of the third millennium BC, there is also evidence for an increase in social stratigraphy at the Boghazköy settlement. Whilst relatively modest structures dating to this period have been found at the ‘Nordwesthang’ and pottery workshops have been identified in the ‘Unterstadt’, remains of two significantly larger structures have been found on the Büyükkale, below the ruins of the palaces of the later, Hittite period. Moreover, these structures already show some features (such as a division into various ‘plateaus’) that are often associated with Hittite (domestic and monumental) architecture. The settlement at Boghazköy may, consequently, already have had its own ruling dynasty; a situation that may be reflected in a later, literary text from Mesopotamia, which refers to a clash between the Akkadian King Naram-Sin (2273-2219 BC) and a coalition of 17 Anatolian Kings, including a certain Pamba, King of Hatti. Regardless of whether this Pamba was a historical ruler or not, it is clear that the late third millennium BC in Central Anatolia was a time of considerable change, for amidst the expanding settlements, there is some evidence for the arrival of new peoples: texts from Kültepe / Neša and dating to this period, indicate the presence of Indo-European populations in this region. Interestingly, archaeology only indicates the presence of these newcomers (including Luwian and Palaean-speaking groups) in the later part of the second millennium BC; the identity of these early Indo-Europeans (in what must have been an overwhelmingly non-Indo-European (Hattic) milieu) remains unclear.

At the beginning of the second millennium BC, the settlement at Boghazköy –like many contemporary centres in Central Anatolia – had become a part of the *karum* trading network with the northern Mesopotamian city of Assur. As a result of these contacts, Assyrian merchants settled at various centres along the trading routes; chiefly in the city of Kanesh / Neša, but also in the settlement at Boghazköy. These merchants introduced the cuneiform script in order to document their transactions (in their mother tongue, Akkadian); numerous of these texts have been found at Kanesh, but also at Boghazköy –or Hattus, as the city was then known (p. 64). In view of the fact that only *Akkadian* texts have so far been found at any of the Karum trading centres, Schachner argues that only a small percentage of the city’s population –probably the Assyrian merchants and certain members of the city’s elite – were literate (p.62). Whilst this is undoubtedly true, it should be noted that there are indications that an indigenous form of script was already developing at centres

such as Hattus and Kanesh, which eventually gave rise to the Anatolian Hieroglyphic script that was widely in use during the Hittite Empire period (cf. W. Waal, ‘They wrote on Wood’, *AnSt* 61, 2011, 21-34, esp. note 4). Assyrian influence, then, did not result in the wholesale adoption of foreign customs: various indigenous practices, such as styles in ceramics, weapons, and metalwork, domestic architecture, and the use of stamp-seals (rather than the Mesopotamian cylinder seals) remained unchanged.

The wealth and significance of Hattus during the Karum period is reflected in its name, (which is thought to have been the Hattic designation for ‘silver’: a suggestion that is supported by the Sumerographic writing of Hattus; KÜ.BABBAR - ‘silver’) as well as in the size of the settlement. Although Karum levels have only been reached sporadically in excavations throughout the ‘Unterstadt’, there is the suggestion that habitation extended well beyond the ‘Altstadt’, towards the later postern wall.

Archaeologically speaking, the transition from the Karum period to the Hittite era is difficult to pinpoint. A text from the reign of King Anitta of Neša reports that Hattus was destroyed around 1750 BC, after which the city was cursed and remained uninhabited for over a century. Archaeological finds at Boghazköy, however, seem to suggest that habitation persisted at the site until at least 1720 BC, although the scale of the settlement remains difficult to establish. In view of these finds, Schachner argues, it now seems possible that there was a continuum between the Karum Hattus and Hattusa, the capital of the Hittite Empire.

It is this later period, during which Hattusa rose to become the capital of one of the ‘Great Powers’ of the Ancient Near East, to which the best part of Schachner’s book is devoted. The aptly titled chapter V (‘Von einer Anatolischen Stadt zur Hauptstadt eines Grossreichs: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Wandel Hattuschas in Hethitischer Zeit’) provides an overview of the development of Hattusa from circa 1650 to circa 1180 BC, whereas Chapter VI (‘Funktionen einer Spätbronzezeitlichen Grossstadt’) has a more thematic approach and includes interesting discussions on city-planning, infrastructural works (e.g. roads, dams and reservoirs) palace and temple architecture, and various aspects of ‘life in the city’ (e.g. daily life in the palace, death and burial, arts and crafts).

In both chapters, Schachner again devotes significant attention to the role of natural geography in the civic development of Hattusa. He notes (on p. 71) that the strategic position of the city (on a high plateau, punctuated by rocky outcrops, and surrounded by a mountain chain) made it an attractive capital for the first Hittite King Labarna / Hattusili I, and his successors. It is likely that the early settlement was already surrounded by a wall, but relatively soon after the establishment of the capital at Hattusa (most probably to the reign of Hantili I, in the early 16th century BC), the city’s defences were strengthened by the construction of a postern wall below the Büyükkale. The wall is a so-called ‘Kastenmauer’; the first of this type, which is now considered to be ‘typically Hittite’, at the site. Although Hattusa’s early rulers may have been primarily interested in fortifying the centre, the city’s geographical setting increasingly became a theatre for the expression of imperial might as military successes pushed the Kingdom’s borders away from the capital. The early Hittite period in many ways marks Hattusa’s transition from a more or less ‘standard’ Anatolian city to an imperial metropolis of unparalleled size and monumentality. Nowhere

is this more apparent than at the centre of royal power, the palace complex at the Büyükkale, where the earliest phases of Hittite occupation are marked by a change from relatively small-scale domestic buildings to increased fortification (phase IVc), massive terracing and the construction of the first monumental buildings (phases IVb and IVa). This process of expressing royal power at the Büyükkale gained greater momentum during the Imperial Age ('der Großreichszeit'; from 1350 to 1180 BC), during which the entire outcrop was gradually covered by large (palatial) structures, grouped around various courtyards.

The transformation of Hattusa into the capital of an empire can also be observed elsewhere in the city. Arguably the most significant change was the inclusion of a whole new area, the 'Oberstadt', within the city walls. Whereas it has long been thought that the Oberstadt was only settled during the 13th century BC, it can now be demonstrated that this vast area was already inhabited during the 16th century BC. Again, natural geography played a significant role in the shaping of the new quarter of the city. Schachner notes that '*das neue Stadtgebiet war durch die Geländeform in zahlreiche, klar abgegrenzte Bereiche unterteilt, die auch funktional unterschiedlich genutzt wurden*' (p.83). Settling this rocky and uneven area had the benefit of bringing a number of natural springs within the walls, thus securing the city's water supply, but the rocky landscape of the Oberstadt also included various natural landmarks (such as the stony outcrops of the Sarikale, Kızılarkayası and Yenice kale) that were eminently suitable as sites for temples and other important structures (such as the (É) NA4hegur SAG.UŠ; a building that was used for mortuary rituals). There is no indication that the expansion of Hattusa towards the south and the inclusion of the Oberstadt was the direct result of, or resulted in, a significant increase of the city's population: other than such practical considerations as securing local water sources, the area seems to have had an essentially ritual, or at least 'monumental', character.

Schachner stresses the point that Hattusa was not exclusively the administrative and ritual capital of the Hittite Kingdom, but also a centre of considerable agricultural importance (as evidenced by the various granaries and water reservoirs in the city; cf. p. 115-116). Although this may have been the case, there can be no doubt of the unique status of the city in the Hittite world and, indeed, in the Hittite mind. Schachner himself refers to this special position of Hattusa at various points in the book. He convincingly argues that it was the extraordinary bond between the city and the Hittite state, that forced Mursili III (ca. 1272-1265 BC) to return to Hattusa and restore the city as the Kingdom's capital, after an unsuccessful attempt by his predecessor (Muwatalli II) to move the capital to the more strategically situated city of Tarhuntassa (a move that may have left monuments such as the relief of the Lions Gate unfinished, and may have resulted in the reconfiguration of the Oberstadt (with the abandonment of several temples and the construction of more mundane structures such as pottery workshops)).

Religion certainly played an important part in establishing Hattusa as the centre of the Hittite Kingdom: numerous temples throughout the city housed the 'thousand Gods of Hatti' (or at least a significant number of them). Many of these gods did not originate from Hattusa or from anywhere near the capital, but from other (originally independent) cities throughout the realm. Whilst various texts indicate that the

festivals of these originally foreign gods were, during the early Hittite period (16th century BC) still celebrated at their respective cult centres, from around the 15th century BC onwards, references to these festivals all but disappeared, to be replaced by references to festivals at the temple of 'God X of City Y' at Hattusa (p.181). The larger the Empire grew, the more centralised its religious institutions became.

The expansion of the Empire did not only lead to the inclusion of various foreign gods in the Hittite pantheon. Numerous conquered peoples (from e.g. western Anatolia, and northern Syria) were incorporated into Hittite society, sometimes with disastrous results: there is the suggestion that the '*verstärkenden Präsenz des Luwischen*' at Hattusa during the final decades of the Hittite Kingdom may relate to the disappearance of both cuneiform Hittite and '*diejenigen, die das Keilschriftethitische verwendet haben – nämlich die Elite des Reichs*', although numerous other causes, such as political instability (rivalry between royal factions), and environmental change (droughts) must have played a part in the fall of the Hittite state around 1180 BC, too.

The fall of the Hittite Kingdom did not, as had long been thought, mean the end of habitation at Hattusa / Boghazköy: Schachner reports that scanty remains of dwellings ('Grubenhäuser'), dating to the Early Iron Age, have been found at the Büyükkaya. Life at Boghazköy continued, but at a much slower and humbler pace (p.313): '*In wenigen Jahrzehnten wurden die Menschen von der Stufe der hethitischen Hochkultur auf ein kulturelles und technisches Niveau zurückgeworfen, das dem des Chalkolithikums entsprach.*' Although Hittite styles and techniques in, for example, pottery production did not disappear overnight, there was a remarkable reversion to Middle and even Early Bronze Age traditions and techniques. 'Hittite culture' to a large extent appears to have been an imperial veneer over local, deep-rooted traditions; with the Empire gone, it seems that many people resorted to doing things 'the old way'. However, as the title of Chapter VIII ('Die Eisenzeit: in die Steinzeit und zurück zur Stadtkultur in wenigen Hundert Jahren') already indicates, the Iron Age was not only a period of disintegration and decline. During the 9th century BC, living standards appear to have risen and domestic architecture became more substantial. This revival continued through the 8th to 7th century BC, and reached its zenith during the 6th century BC (the so-called Büyükkale I stratum). By this time, Boghazköy was one of the larger cities of Anatolia, with clear evidence for social stratification (although there is no evidence for a palace) and specialization. There is also evidence for cultic activity; a large stone statue of the goddess Cybele was found near the Southeastern Gate of the Büyükkale. Yet despite the revival of urban life at Boghazköy, the city appears to have been abandoned relatively soon thereafter, for reasons that are not yet fully understood. Although it is likely that some habitation at the site continued until the Persian Period, there are only few signs of human activity in the area after that period (although some human activity during the late Classical period / Byzantine period is reported in Chapter IX). It seems that Boghazköy, after almost five millennia of habitation, was finally abandoned.

As aforementioned, the scope of this new publication on Hattusa is huge. The amount of data (stemming both from archaeological fieldwork and textual analyses, and covering – as has been observed above – almost five millennia of human occupation) that is presented in the book is simply

breathhtaking, yet Schachner presents the story of Hattusa in a sweeping, lucid narrative. His vivid reconstruction of life in Hattusa through the ages is supplemented by numerous beautiful (full colour) illustrations and (black on white) maps. In sum, 'Hattuscha, Auf der Suche nach dem sagenhaften Großreich der Hethiter', is an admirably accessible, beautifully produced book on human settlement at Boghazköy, and should become a classic within the field of Anatolian and Hittite studies.

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