

WAYS OF BEING HITTITE: EMPIRE AND BORDERLANDS IN LATE BRONZE AGE ANATOLIA AND NORTHERN SYRIA

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In this paper, I take identity as a characteristic of empire in its periphery, denoting the totality of: 1) the imperial strategies an empire pursues in different regions, 2) the index of empire in each region, and 3) local responses to imperialism. My case study is the Hittite Empire, which dominated parts of what is now modern Turkey and northern Syria between the seventeenth and twelfth centuries BCE, and its borderlands.

To investigate the identities of the Hittite imperial system, I explore the totality of the second millennium BCE in two regions. First, I explore imperial dynamics and responses in the Ilgın Plain in inner southwestern Turkey through a study of the material collected by the Yalbur Yaylası Archaeological Landscape Research Project since 2010. Second, I explore the identity of the Hittite Empire in the city of Emar in northern Syria by a thorough study of the textual and archaeological material unearthed by the Emar Expedition. In both cases, I argue that the manifestations of the Hittite Empire were mainly conditioned by the pre-Hittite trajectories of these regions. The strategies that the administration chose to use in different borderlands sought to identify what was important locally, with the Hittite Empire integrating itself into networks that were already established as manifestations of power, instead of replacing them with new ones.

INTRODUCTION

On their seals, the kings of the Hittite Empire in Anatolia (c.1650–1180 BCE) used multiple languages and scripts, demonstrating a determination to embrace a plurality of identities that would speak to different audiences.¹ One example is found in a stamp seal of Muwatalli II that

¹ This article partially stems from the research I undertook for my dissertation, completed in 2016 at Brown University's Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World with financial support from the Fulbright Foreign Student Program and the ARIT Fellowship in the Humanities and Social Sciences, as well as the William A. Dyer Fellowship, Dean's Faculty Fellowship, and Joukowsky Summer Research Award offered by Brown University. I would like to thank my committee members for their generous mentorship and help: John F. Cherry, Susan E. Alcock, Ömür Harmanşah, Felipe Rojas, Matthew Rutz, Claudia Glatz, and Peter van Dommelen. I am indebted to Ömür Harmanşah and Peri Johnson for encouraging and allowing me to work on the second-millennium BCE assemblages from the Yalbur Yaylası Archaeological Landscape Research Project. I am grateful to Eşref Abay for his kind permission that enabled me to study the Beycesultan ceramics from the British excavations, now hosted at the British Institute at Ankara. I am thankful to the staff of the BIAA for their hospitality. I am grateful to Gina Konstantopoulos for including me in the "Strange and the Familiar: Identity and Empire in the Ancient Near East" conference held in

brings together words in multiple languages,² two scripts and figural representations (Fig. 1). He is portrayed under the protective embrace of the Storm God, with the names of both the king and the deity written next to their figural depictions in the hieroglyphic Luwian script (Herbordt, Bawanypeck & Hawkins 2011, Kat. 39). The *aedicula* in the central field of the seal prioritized the Hurrian name of the king, Šarri-Tešub, written again in Luwian hieroglyphs.³ Around this scene were two concentric lines of cuneiform, the inner one designating Muwatalli II as “Your Majesty Šarri-Tešub, Great King, son of Mursili, Great King, Hero, beloved of the Storm God” (Hawkins 2011: 94–95).

This small object, and its numerous impressions on tablets sent to different parts of the empire and the neighboring states, spoke to multiple constituents by drawing from various cultural, linguistic, and administrative references. To the northern Mesopotamian courts, Muwatalli II was Šarri-Tešub; to the diverse communities of the Hittite Empire in Anatolia, he was Muwatalli or Šarri-Tešub, but written in the Luwian script; and to the illiterate, he was a pious king held in the embrace and protection of the Storm God. The growing literature in identity studies provides us with many similar examples of individuals and communities, past and present, who embraced plurality in their identity construction, maintenance, and communication. Identities are amalgams that are performed, negotiated, and in constant flux (Díaz-Andreu & Lucy 2005: 1–2). Identities change; individuals and communities manipulate them in ways that best serve their purposes at any given moment.

Muwatalli II’s seal is just one example of a larger framework of imperial strategies through which the Hittite Empire purposefully performed new identities in different regions, so much so that how the empire operated and what it targeted changed dramatically between areas. Below, I present evidence pertaining to politics of landscape and space, material culture, and continued local practices to discuss the impact of the Hittite Empire on local communities. My specific focus is on the borderlands, where the Hittite political elite refrained from establishing a limited set of ways to be Hittite and used varying strategies to incorporate themselves into existing networks of power. The identities of the Hittite Empire depended on the continued local practices of the borderlands, and thus the multiple faces of the empire were derived from the power relationships of the margins. Below, a brief introduction to Anatolia and northern Syria during the Hittite period is coupled with a theoretical discussion of borderlands as they are used in this paper. Afterwards, I present two case studies: the Ilgın Plain and its surrounding highlands in the southwestern borderlands, and the city of Emar in the southeast (Fig. 2). Both regions actively switched, chose, and negotiated between alliances and influences, while also maintaining strongly local characters. Detailed scrutiny of the portable material culture, landscape monuments, and large-scale waterworks suggests that the Ilgın Plain experienced a significant imperial intervention that resulted in a gradual shift in orientation from non-Hittite western Anatolia to Hittite-dominated central Anatolia throughout the second millennium BCE.

Helsinki in August 2019, and in the present resulting publication. I have benefited from many discussions with İlgi Gerçek in this article and beyond. I would like to thank Catherine Steidl, Kathryn C. McBride, Peri Johnson, Ömür Harmanşah, and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on the manuscript.

2 Both the cuneiform rings around the seal and the center piece with the hieroglyphic signs make minimal use of phonetic complements, making it difficult to ascribe them to a language grammatically. Still, it is possible to mention that inner and outer cuneiform rings contain Sumerograms and Akkadograms, as well as names in Hittite and Hurrian.

3 In the Hittite context, the term *aedicula* denotes the royal name in hieroglyphic Luwian, written in the niche defined by the signs for a great king on either end and the winged sun disk at the top (Lumsden 1990: 129).



Figure 1 Composite drawing of a stamp seal of Muwatalli II showing him in the embrace of the Storm God (Herbordt, Bawanyeck & Hawkins 2011, Tafel 9 Cat. Rek. 39.1–11). © Archive of the Boğazköy-Expedition, DAI Berlin. Image courtesy of Suzanne Herbordt.

The urban landscape of Emar, in contrast, demonstrates a limited intervention by the Hittite Empire, which seems to have been represented by the specific cult office of the Diviner and his family. I argue that these two very different cases are both equally valid incarnations of the Hittite Empire, which was very successful in analyzing the existing power relationships in these regions and incorporating itself into local practices of performing power.

THE HITTITE EMPIRE AND ITS BORDERLANDS

During the Late Bronze Age,⁴ the Hittites controlled parts of Anatolia and northern Syria from their core region on the central Anatolian plateau, including the capital at Hattusa. The reign of Suppiluliuma I in mid-fourteenth century BCE marks the start of an expansionist policy which resulted in the Hittites claiming many new territories in Anatolia and Syria through the defeat of the Mittanian Empire (Bryce 2005: 188). Many have argued that it was at this moment that the Hittites truly became a viable empire (McMahon 1989: 68–69; Collins 2007: 49; Genz & Mielke 2011: 15, fig. 2). The physical, political, and cultural landscapes against which Hittite imperialism was enacted were diverse. To give just a few examples, legal documents demonstrate that there were communities of Luwian speakers to the west and southwest, which were considered distinct from the Hittites (Melchert 2003: 1–2). Hurrian speakers inhabited southern and southeastern Anatolia (Singer 1984: 124; Gilan 2008: 107), while in the north various groups collectively known as Kaska continuously confronted the Hittite authority (Gerçek 2012). Beyond these, there was the Seha-River Land, Mira, Hulaya-River Land, and countless other territories named in the texts with varied sets of material practices, rituals, political agendas, and maybe even languages. Within such a diverse cultural landscape, the borderlands of the empire constantly served as stages for encounters where local histories met imperial demands and where multiple identities formed.

⁴ A brief note on Anatolian chronology is needed here to contextualize the discussions throughout the article. The Early Bronze Age (henceforth EBA) is dated roughly to the entirety of the third millennium BCE, while a major destruction horizon is encountered in many Anatolian EBA sites in c.2200 BCE, sometimes leading to the conceptualization of c.2200–2000 BCE as a “transitional period” (e.g., Bachhuber 2015, Table 2). The Middle Bronze Age (henceforth MBA) covers c.2000–1650 BCE, while the Late Bronze Age (henceforth LBA) can be dated to c.1650–1180 BCE.

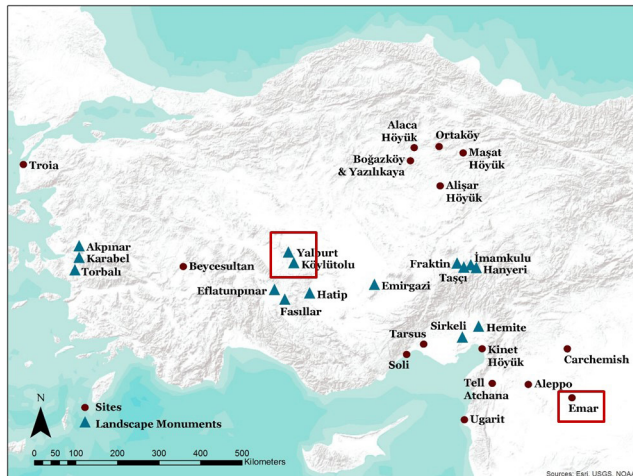


Figure 2 Map showing the locations of the case studies, as well as other key sites (circles) and monuments (triangles) of the Hittite Empire. Map by author, using the ArcGIS software and the base map provided by Esri, USGS, NQAA.

A particularly productive line of inquiry for exploring the in-between and interactive character of borderlands has been their study from a postcolonial perspective, including their comparison with Homi Bhabha's "Third Space" (Naum 2010; 2012). Bhabha (2004: 312) argued, "The non-synchronous temporality of global and national cultures opens up a cultural space – a third space – where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences." Within these tensions, the meanings of symbols shift, and signs come to appropriate multiple new meanings and significances (Bhabha 2004: 55). These encounters forge hybrid practices and hybrid material culture (van Dommelen 2006: 118). The postcolonial turn in borderlands was bolstered by archaeology claiming stakes in this literature. This archaeological discourse argued for the value of material culture for understanding the processes taking place and shaping the borderlands, and it was fundamental in demonstrating that these regions were not just passive recipients of center-driven innovations but had their own histories that shaped both their own and the center's trajectories (e.g., Lightfoot & Martinez 1995). Borderlands are thus a series of "non-binary" spaces that create their own realities (Ylimaunu et al. 2014: 249). As such, they are neither one nor the other. Instead, "borderlands are physically present wherever two or more groups come into contact with each other, where people of different cultural backgrounds occupy the same territory and where the space between them grows intimate" (Naum 2010: 101). Such encounters physically forge borderlands, actual lived-in spaces in which multiple lifeways, belief systems, and worldviews meet, merge, and transform. While other forms of borderlands do exist (e.g., temporal, mental, and social, to name a few), and have doubtlessly been influential in shaping Hittite history, physical borderlands and the lived, bodily experiences they brewed are at the core of this paper.

A rich anthropological literature exists on such heterogeneous frontier regions. Gloria Anzaldúa's influential work *Borderlands/La Frontera*, for instance, defines borderlands as being interconnected zones of flux, where ambivalence and unrest are familiar, and where two worlds come together to create a unique third world that is neither one nor the other (Anzaldúa 1987: 3). Anzaldúa's heavily cited definitions of borderlands are rooted in the very specific context of her biographical account of growing up along the US-Mexico border with a queer identity; nevertheless, they highlight how experiences of and in the borderlands are always contingent on particular circumstances. Exploring borderlands in the ancient world likewise requires recognizing their unique character. As convincingly argued by Harmanşah (2015: 33),

ancient borderlands were networks that brought powerful landscapes, practices, and places together. Thus, borderlands are not fixed but dynamic assemblages of constantly changing geographies, places, and communities.

Borderlands, at least in the sense that I use them here, are not merely the borders of the Hittite Empire, but areas of complex encounters in which multiple identities interacted and the resulting hybridities appropriated existing networks of power and place. While a comprehensive literature exists on the borders of the Hittite Empire, much of it has been influenced by two sets of data seemingly offering evidence for territorial control. The first comprise the archival records of the center, and especially the treaties and diplomatic texts that count the cities, monuments, and natural features that separated the Hittite state from its neighbors.⁵ While these texts draw detailed and neatly drawn textual borders, the case studies that I present in this paper demonstrate that life “within the borders” was not always strictly controlled by the empire. Second, there has been an emphasis on the presence of the monochrome wares of the LBA in areas as an index of the political control of the Hittite core region over those regions. These monochrome wares (also called “drab ware” in the literature) were widespread in the Hittite central region within the bend of the Kızılırmak River as well as outside of it: in sites such as Gordion in the west, Tille Höyük and Lidar Höyük in the upper Euphrates basin, and many sites in Cilicia in the south. This distribution led to the interpretation that the presence of monochrome ware demonstrated the direct political control of a centralized Hittite power (e.g., Postgate 2007: 142). As more research ensued on the LBA levels outside of the Hittite core region, however, this picture started to change. Claudia Glatz’s analysis (2007; 2009) of the different yet overlapping networks of power within the Hittite Empire brought a continuous and territorial Hittite power into question. Recent fieldwork from the borderlands of the Hittite Empire have started to confirm the heterogeneous experiences of the empire, especially in its border zones (e.g., Karacic 2014; Harmaşah 2015: 30–53; Durusu-Tanrıöver 2016; Harmaşah et al. in press). The present article contributes to this strand of literature.

My shift in the focus from the edges to the borderlands themselves specifically aims to study the zones where the Hittite Empire clashed with another state, polity, or culture, and not the line where the Hittite Empire ended. This specific emphasis of empire and borderlands is effective for studying Late Bronze Age Anatolia, where top-down imperial ambitions encountered diachronic local histories. These borderlands, each and every one of them, engendered a new and distinct configuration of the Hittite Empire.

CONSUMING THE EMPIRE AT YALBURT

The region to the southwest of the Hittite core area, referred to as the “Lower Land” in Hittite textual sources, was a frontier. Hittite kings frequently passed through this region on their military campaigns against the kingdom of Arzawa to the west (Forlanini 2017: 239–240). King Mursili II’s (r. 1321–1295 BCE) Ten Year Annals and Extensive Annals account for his travels

5 An example is found in a clause from the treaty between Tudhaliya IV and Kurunta, the king of Tarhuntassa in the south: “In the direction of the city of Ussa, his (i.e. Kurunta’s) frontier is the city of Zarata, but Zarata belongs to the land of the Hulaya River” (Beckman 1999: 115, explanation in parentheses added for clarification). The treaty contains a total of 16 clauses pointing to different directions (Beckman 1999: 114–115), followed by a list of some of the towns and communities under the control of Kurunta (Beckman 1999: 116).

to the lands of Arzawa and Mira to solve the conflicts with polities such as Ahhiyawa⁶ and the Seha-River Land,⁷ suggesting that he spent his third and fourth regnal years in western Anatolia going back and forth, waging war, and making treaties with these polities (Beckman, Bryce & Cline 2011: 10–45).

One of the longest monumental inscriptions of the Hittite Empire stands in the Lower Land, at the site of Yalburt in the highlands surrounding the Ilgın Plain on the northwestern edge of the Konya Province (Fig. 3). Mount Huwatnuwanda of the Hittite sources has been identified as the Sultan Dağı (Barjamovic 2011: 371) or Aladağ (Erbil & Mouton 2018: 91) bordering the western or southern end of the Ilgın Plain, respectively. Through either identification, the Ilgın Plain is rendered as part of Pedassa/Pitassa, a region claimed to be conquered by the Hittite Empire (Hawkins 1995: 51, n. 71; Harmanşah & Johnson 2014: 378). The same region is often mentioned in the Bronze Tablet, rendering Pitassa as part of this complex frontier region (§3–4 Beckman 1996: 109; Forlanini 2017: 244).⁸ Erected by Tudhaliya IV (r. 1237–1209 BCE), a prolific patron of monuments and new foundations, the Yalburt inscription relates to the campaigns undertaken by the king on the western and southwestern frontiers. Within the text, the monument itself is referred to as a “stone-stand place” (SCALPRUM.CRUS.LOCUS) in the frontier (FINES) (Hawkins 1995: 69), a reference that strengthens the view that this part of the Lower Land was a buffer zone between Hatti and the troublesome west (Harmanşah & Johnson 2014: 378).

While the Yalburt monument plays into the narrative of the troubled frontier, Tudhaliya IV’s reign toward the very end of the Hittite Empire seems to have also addressed another agenda. A series of irrigation projects undertaken by him demonstrates the presence of imperial intervention for the purpose of economic intensification. Located 20 kilometers southeast of the Yalburt monument is the Köylütolu Dam, a 900 m-long and 25 m-high embankment (Harmanşah et al. 2017: 301) (Fig. 4). This dam is one of the many water infrastructure projects thought to have been patronized by Tudhaliya IV during the last century of the empire. Other examples, such as Karakuyu (in Kayseri) and Gölpınarı (near the site of Alaca Höyük in Çorum), are smaller in size but more efficient in collecting water. While Karakuyu still stores seasonal rain and is used by the villagers during the arid summer months (Emre 1993: 3), Gölpınar was revitalized by the Turkish State Hydraulic Works (DSİ) to supply the nearby village of Alacahöyük with 25,000 m³ of irrigation water (DSİ 2009); currently, it is part of an archaeopark (Apaydın et al. 2020). Contrary to these examples, geomorphological research has demonstrated that the Köylütolu dam never collected or stored any water—and thus never functioned as a dam. The location of the embankment is a swallow hole, a most inconvenient place to build a dam, and coring samples did not demonstrate any sedimentation related to water collection (Harmanşah

6 Ahhiyawa is now widely accepted to refer to the Mycenaean kingdom and its affiliated populations to the west of Hatti, while the exact geographic reference of the term and whether it refers to all of the Greek mainland, islands and western Anatolia, all of the above, or different combinations of different geographic locations at different times are still debated (Beckman, Bryce & Cline 2011).

7 This region is located to the west of the Yalburt Survey region and is thought to be centered around the modern Marmara Gölü (Gygean Lake) in the LBA (Luke et al. 2015: 435).

8 The so-called Bronze Tablet records the treaty of Hittite King Tudhaliya IV with Kurunta, the ruler of the local kingdom of Tarhuntassa (Ottén 1988). Tarhuntassa was not uniformly under Hittite hegemony during the Late Bronze Age, and switched back and forth between Hittite rule and independence. The importance of the region is most visible from Muwatalli II’s move of the imperial capital from Hattusa to the capital city of Tarhuntassa, which bore the same name. Previously equated with various southern Anatolian regions including rough Cilicia, recent archaeological work may have finally located this elusive city in the Konya Plain (Massa et al. 2020: 65).



Figure 3 Yalbur Yaylası sacred pool monument. Photograph by Ömür Harmanşah. ©Yalbur Yaylası Archaeological Landscape Research Project.

& Johnson 2013: 76). As other contemporary water collection facilities demonstrate a significant understanding of the geology and topography of their respective areas, it is difficult to imagine that the largest-known Hittite water investment would be mistakenly built on a swallow hole. Instead, the embankment could have been intended to create a wetland environment, a *gölyeri* (“lake-place”), a water-laden ecotope associated with settlements in the close vicinity. The aforementioned swallow hole unfortunately prevented the collection of water either for a *gölyeri* or for a dam reservoir (Harmanşah et al. 2017: 302). While it is impossible to definitively identify the intended purposes of Köylütolu, the monumental scale of its investment certainly speaks to the importance of this region for the Hittite political administration.

A hieroglyphic Luwian inscription carved on a basin was found near the Köylütolu embankment, to its west (Johnson & Harmanşah 2015: 258). Consisting of three lines of text written in boustrophedon, the text relates to the campaign of the palace official Sauskakuruntis against the city of Attarima, and his conquest on behalf of the Hittite Great King (Woudhuizen 1995: 164–165).⁹ The Great King in question is not named, but is generally assumed to be Tudhaliya IV (e.g., Masson 1980; Hawkins 2015).¹⁰ In combination with the Yalbur inscription, the Köylütolu embankment and its associated narrative point to a series of significant imperial interventions in the region, which resulted in a strictly controlled and heavily invested frontier.

9 Different readings exist for the names of both the city and the official: e.g., Titarma and Sausga-Ru(wa)ti (Masson 1980); Alatarma and Sauskaruntiya (Hawkins 2015: 5).

10 This is contra Woudhuizen (1995: 162–164), who suggests that the Köylütolu monument should be dated to Muwatalli or Hattusili III based on the lack of interest of Tudhaliya IV in Attarima.



Figure 4 The Köylütölu Dam in its landscape context. Map by author using satellite image from Google Earth (based on Harmanşah et al. 2017: Figure 14–5) ©Yalburt Yaylası Archaeological Landscape Research Project.

However, this seemingly firm grip of the empire on the region should not be taken as a sign of uncontested Hittite hegemony. Another Late Bronze Age landscape monument located in the Konya Plain, approximately 85 km southeast of Yalburt is Hatip, which depicts Kurunta, a king of the local kingdom of Tarhuntassa in the thirteenth century BCE, and designates him the Great King, which was a title reserved for Hittite kings ruling from the capital at Hattusa (Ehringhaus 2001). This monument alone suggests that we cannot assume a homogenous Hittite power uncritically accepted by local populations. Testing this hypothesis requires scrutiny of archaeological assemblages from the region and, accordingly, a study of patterns of local continuity and fracture to understand the changes caused by the impact of the Hittite Empire. This was not possible until recently because of the limited nature of the archaeological research in the area, especially on a regional scale (see Harmanşah & Johnson 2012: 339–340 for an overview of previous archaeological fieldwork there).

The Yalburt Yaylası Archaeological Landscape Research Project, directed by Ömür Harmanşah since 2010, is finally providing us with an archaeological assemblage to understand with a bottom-up perspective the nature of Hittite power in this archaeologically understudied region. During both field and study seasons between 2010 and the time of writing (2020), the team has recorded 125 Survey Units (SU) in the Ilgın and Kadınhanı districts and studied their material culture in detail.¹¹ Within the framework of the Yalburt Survey, an SU is a significant place of archaeological interest with an intensity of materials, regardless of whether these materials belong to in-situ remains of ancient or historical settlements, a site of cultural activity, or a more recent collection of artifacts, such as an assemblage of spolia in an otherwise contemporary village (Harmanşah et al. in press). The SUs discussed in this paper were extensive settlements with rich surface finds including ceramics, lithics, and sometimes objects fashioned of other materials, such as metal. As a regional project,

¹¹ I have been participating in the Yalburt Survey Project since 2011 in the capacity of a senior team member. I have also been responsible for studying and publishing the second-millennium BCE ceramics in detail, which constitutes the basis for the data presented below.

the Yalburt Survey employs pedestrian survey, where field walkers walk parallel transects (where possible) four meters apart. Yalburt Yaylası, Karaköy Kale Tepesi, and Boz Höyük are examples of such intensely surveyed settlements, all central to a better understanding of imperial dynamics in this borderland region. However, as many landscapes we worked in are overgrown, built, or disturbed, this strategy had to be reconsidered at multiple sites where the field walkers prioritized areas with visibility. In either scenario, all encountered material was collected. After a preliminary sorting in the field, non-diagnostic materials were thrown back, and the diagnostics were brought to the survey lab for detailed study and recording.¹² The data presented below is based on an evaluation of the second-millennium BCE sites in the survey region, and particularly in the Ilgın Plain (Fig. 5).

An oft-cited problem with previous survey work on the second-millennium BCE settlements of Anatolia is the difficulty in distinguishing between the assemblages of the earlier and later halves of the millennium based on survey evidence alone (e.g., Whallon 1979; Matessi & Tomassini Pieri 2017: 98). Excavated contexts can attest to a sustained set of practices in pottery production and consumption. For instance, central Anatolian settlements such as Hattusa or Kuşaklı demonstrate very little difference between their pre-Hittite (i.e., MBA, c.2000–1650 BCE) and Hittite (i.e., LBA, c.1650–1180 BCE) assemblages.¹³ In Hattusa, the repertoire becomes increasingly standardized from the MBA onwards. The main changes occur in the realm of the gradually simplified surface treatment, resulting in a corpus dominated by plain wares (Schoop 2009: 151). This has engendered a statistical dating technique devised by Ulf Schoop (2006; 2009) based on a close study of the changes in elements, such as the rim length and rim thickening. This approach, of course, necessitates a sample that can be statistically meaningful and coherent, such as a sealed archaeological context deposited at one single time period, and does not work with surface collections. In contrast to the pessimistic interpretations dominant in literature, which emphasize the difficulty that the continuity of ceramic repertoire raises for us in terms of precisely dating surface scatters, I would like to promote a more optimistic take on this subject. Sustained trends and technologies in pottery production throughout the second millennium BCE point to long-term continuity in many local lifeways under the Hittite Empire, strengthening my claim that Hittite borderlands were diverse areas, each meriting focused and contextual scrutiny on its own terms. Another benefit of working with such a conservative assemblage is the representative power of the small changes. When the changes in the LBA are weighed against continuities throughout the second millennium BCE, they have the ability to specifically demonstrate the impact of the Hittite Empire on a region. This can then be read as an indicator of the response to the empire in a certain region, be it by resistance, adoption, or emulation. These are the outcomes of different kinds of encounters between local communities and the Hittite Empire. Such an act requires diagnosing elements in the assemblage that can mark both ends of the second-millennium BCE spectrum, albeit roughly. This would at least allow us to suggest a preliminary distinction between the MBA and the LBA. Through this, it is possible to construct a narrative of settlement change across the Yalburt survey region during the second millennium BCE, as well as mark the continuities and fractures in material practices before and during the Hittite Empire.

12 This was not possible for the 2013, 2014, and 2015 seasons, when the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism did not allow archaeological survey projects to collect and store archaeological materials. During these seasons, the recording was done on site, as much as possible, and some of these sites were revisited in the later seasons, when we were able to collect materials again. For a more detailed treatment of the survey, collection, and analysis methodologies of the Yalburt Yaylası Archaeological Landscape Research Project, see Harmanşah et al. in press.

13 Burial practices also demonstrate a similar continuity through the third and second millennia BCE (Durgun 2018a; 2018b: 311–312).

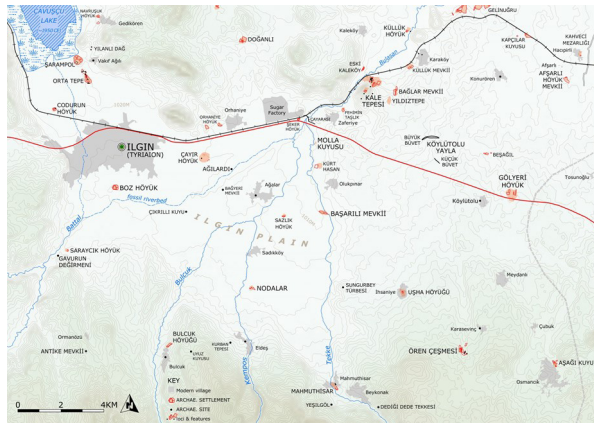


Figure 5 Sites in the Ilgın Plain. Orange and red denote surveyed settlements, while black dots mark other archaeological sites. Map by Peri Johnson. ©Yalburç Yaylası Archaeological Landscape Research Project.

Bead-rim bowls mark the presence of the MBA, as they are the characteristic shape of inner-western Anatolia during this period, and they are attested in regional centers in conspicuous amounts. One good example is the site of Beycesultan in the Çivril plain of Denizli where bead-rim bowls are the most common vessel type of levels V, IVa, IVb, and IVc. These levels account for the earlier part of the second millennium BCE, making bead-rim bowls the dominant MBA vessel type of Beycesultan (Lloyd & Mellaart 1965: 69–70). The pervasiveness of this shape spans a large portion of the west-central plateau, starting at the final stage of the Early Bronze Age. Fashioned after metal examples dating to the Early Bronze Age (Özgüç 1955: 58–59, fig. 58–62; Lloyd & Mellaart 1965: 82–83), the bead-rim bowls are almost exclusively closed vessel types with sharp carinations. The Beycesultan examples feature so-called “imitation handles” and high-quality, almost metallic burnishing—replicating the effect of the metal prototypes.¹⁴ Some examples have radial burnishing, a hallmark of Beycesultan’s local ceramic tradition. As the bead-rim bowls do not continue into the LBA, they provide a convenient marker for the MBA. The presence of these bowls date sites to the earlier end of the second millennium BCE spectrum, as distinct from the rest of the MBA assemblage that continues into the LBA.

New introductions to the central Anatolian repertoire during the late second millennium BCE mark the other end of the spectrum. These include miniature vessels used for votive offerings and flat baking plates with very large diameters, which were used for baking bread over a fire (Schoop 2011: 247–249). Spindle bottles and arm-shaped vessels made in the Red Lustrous Wheel-made Ware (RLWmW) appear during the fifteenth century BCE (Schoop 2011: 262; 2013: 366), and vessels in this ware are associated with ritual contexts (Schoop 2011: 254; Glatz 2015: 192, contra Mielke 2007: 164–165). Thus, two of these new actors are associated with ritual settings, while the third, the flat plate, signals food production for communal purposes. With diameters as large as 80 cm (Schoop 2011: 246), the bread produced on these plates would hardly be fit for individual consumption. Interestingly, the Yalburç Survey assemblage has rare examples of the ritual vessels, while the flat plates feature extensively, demonstrating a deliberate choice leaning toward certain types of central Anatolian vessels associated with eating practices. This is a topic I will turn to below.

14 Imitation of metallic ware is a common MBA phenomenon beyond the bead-rim bowls. In Beycesultan, for instance, imitation of metal vessels is visible also in other bowls, jugs, drinking cups, and jars (Lloyd & Mellaart 1965: 70). Another example is the Ferzant-type bowls excavated in the Ferzant necropolis near Çorum and a few other necropolei in central Anatolia. These wheelmade, and carinated deep bowls also sought to imitate metal prototypes and were yielded almost exclusively from burial contexts (Kulakoğlu 1996).

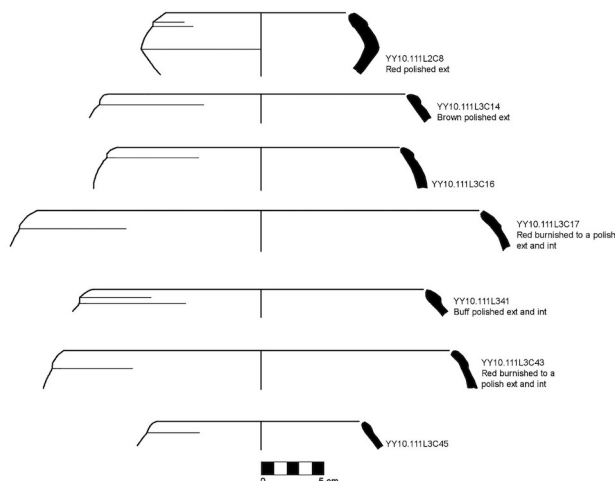


Figure 6 Examples of bead-rim bowls from Orta Tepe. Drawings by author. ©Yalbur Yaylası Archaeological Landscape Research Project.

When applied to the data retrieved through the Yalbur Survey, these chronological markers enable us to analyze patterns of continuity and change between the pre-Hittite and Hittite periods. The most extensive MBA assemblages come from the sites of Orta Tepe and Kaleköy Küllük Höyük. Orta Tepe is located on the southeastern edge of Lake Çavuşçu, and is surrounded by fertile agricultural lands. The 1.5 m of alluvial deposition at the nearby Codurun Höyük since the Hellenistic period indicates a better drained landscape in the Bronze Age than the modern marshy environment (Peri Johnson, pers. comm.). However, geomorphological research still suggests that Orta Tepe was surrounded by a shallow lake or a marshy area in the Bronze Age as well (Harmanşah, Johnson & Doğan 2010: 23). The MBA ceramics of both Orta Tepe and Küllük Höyük are dominated by vessels used for consumption of food and drinks (71% and 44% of the overall repertoires, respectively),¹⁵ and include bead-rim bowls (Fig. 6). These examples are mostly made of buff or brown monochrome ware, sometimes with self-slip.¹⁶ They rarely seek to mimic the metallic prototypes: imitation handles are rare, as are high-quality, metallic surface treatments and radial burnishing. Their diameters range between 21 to 26 cm, making them fit as personal consumption vessels. As such, they signal eating practices that were focused on the individual, where everyone had their own vessel and corresponding meal. While we cannot ascertain whether these individual vessels were used in communal eating settings, the material signature of MBA food consumption in the Yalbur Survey region is focused on

15 The data presented here is analyzed and discussed in length in my doctoral dissertation (Durusu-Tanrıöver 2016). The ceramics from each site were classified into five broad functional categories: food preparation, consumption, storage, ritual, and multi-purpose vessels. This classification was based on a typological assessment of the Yalbur material and the associations of these shapes in other well-excavated and well-published collections from Central Anatolia, particularly Hattusa and Kuşaklı (Fischer 1963; Parzinger & Sanz 1992; Müller-Karpe, A. 1988; 2002; Müller-Karpe, V. 1998; 2000; Schoop 2002; 2011) and Beycesultan (Lloyd & Mellaart 1965; Mellaart & Murray 1995; Mac Sweeney 2011). For the sites in question here, the total breakdown of classifications are as follows. Orta Tepe: consumption 71%, food preparation 21%, storage 4%, ritual 4%. Kaleköy Küllük Höyük: consumption 44%, food preparation 40%, multi-purpose 8%, storage 4%, ritual 4%.

16 In Hittite ceramics, self-slip occurs when finer clays are used with little inclusions. The finest particles levitate to the surface through the centrifugal force generated by the throwing wheel, and form a self-slip through the wetting of the vessel during the throwing process.

smaller portions of meals being served in independent vessels. This model changes with the LBA, as will be discussed below.

One of the new LBA foundations in the area, Boz Höyük, is a good case to discuss the impact of the consolidation of the Hittite power on the region. The site is located to the south of Lake Çavuşçu in the western corner of the Ilgın Plain. Its landscape context is similar to that of Orta Tepe, bordering the fertile agricultural plain. Boz Höyük yielded the most extensive LBA assemblage from the entire survey area so far, while many of the vessel forms and wares are directly comparable to the Hittite contexts on the central plateau. These include copious amounts of monochrome vessels, including deep bowls, plates, and jugs. Food preparation, storage, and consumption vessels are equally represented, all with multiple parallels to central Anatolia. The variety and size of the Boz Höyük assemblage encourage a discussion of the role of Boz Höyük within the whole imperial system. The majority of the Hittite ceramic repertoire were products of mass production in workshops (Schoop 2013: 359), while not necessarily in the ones administered in the core area of the empire. Examples of monochrome ware in many cities outside of the Hittite central area were demonstrated to be local productions (e.g., Kilise Tepe, Postgate 2007: 142; Tarsus, Karacic 2014: 217; Gordion, Henrickson 1995: 87). In the case of Boz Höyük, then, we can entertain two possibilities: an active workshop controlled by the site of Boz Höyük, or mass shipments of vessels (and their contents, where plausible) from the central plateau to this regional center. In either scenario, it is clear that Boz Höyük was an important regional center with strong links to the Hittite imperial administration.

While the rest of the LBA repertoires from the survey region do not reflect the same variety of ceramic forms, they all share an emphasis on consumption vessels, which make up at least a third of the entire repertoire. Within this repertoire, the so-called anti-splash rim bowl, a bowl with a rim strengthened on the interior to avoid spilling of food items, is the dominant shape (Fig. 7). Such flat bowls, mostly with strengthened rims, form the majority of the overall Hittite ceramic repertoire, and were most likely used for serving both food and drinks, as they are not matched by similar numbers of drinking vessels (Schoop 2013: 361). Also constituting a large part of the assemblage in Hattusa, anti-splash rim bowls were possibly linked with feasts (Glatz 2015: 196–197). Recently, Glatz (2015: 189) pointed to the importance of feasting in Late Bronze Age Anatolia, which would be “often associated with rituals and dramaturgical events and serve multiple social purposes from highlighting of internal social difference to furthering community cohesion,” as evidenced by the more than 160 events involving communal consumption in the Hittite ritual calendar. However, as Glatz (2015: 203) also argues, there was not a uniform “Hittite feasting kit” that can be attested throughout Hittite-influenced Anatolia, and different sites highlighted different parts of the Hittite consumption repertoire. Evaluating the Yalburt Survey region consumption vessels alongside central Anatolian correlates within this context, it is possible to say that the inhabitants of the site showed a clear preference for a specific type of Hittite bowl for eating—the anti-splash rim bowl—and not so much for the rest of the consumption repertoire from central Anatolia such as drinking vessels.

The persistent presence of vessels for eating and drinking in both the MBA and LBA assemblages from the Yalburt Survey points to the importance of consumption practices in this region. Furthermore, the parallels to western and central Anatolia in the collection suggest the importance of consumption in the construction and maintenance of local, regional, and imperial identities in this southwestern part of the empire. In contrast, other practices seem much less affected by the expansion of the Hittite power: central Anatolian vessels used for ritual or large-scale storage

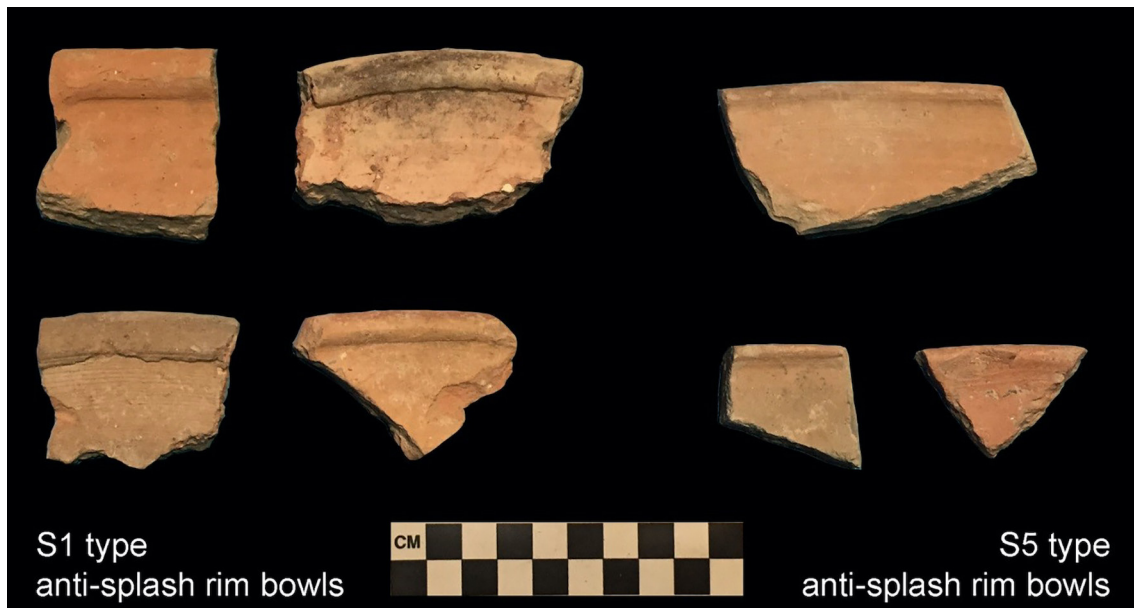


Figure 7 Examples of anti-splash rim bowls from Boz Höyük. Photographs by Ömür Harmanşah. ©Yalbur Yaylası Archaeological Landscape Research Project)

purposes are rare in the Yalbur Survey region, demonstrating that the local communities, who inhabited the Ilgın Plain in the LBA, made specific choices in their relationship with the Hittite Empire that prioritized food consumption, as was the case in the pre-Hittite period. While consumption remained an important way to perform identity politics, its form changed with the rise of the Hittite power. In each period, the residents of this part of the southwestern borderlands seem to have favored certain vessel types over others. Moving on from the closed, smaller, individual vessels of the MBA to the larger, open-form bowls of the LBA, it is possible to see a change toward communal consumption, or feasts, in the Hittite period. Within these identity politics, material practices that fit with the emerging paradigms were adopted, used, and reproduced.

Such selective acts of adoption in the borderlands of an empire are hardly unique. While examples abound, I will make a brief detour to the neighboring geography of Lycia almost a full millennium later to refer to one such instance: the paintings in the tomb known as Karaburun II near Elmalı (Antalya), where a Lycian dignitary was buried in *c.*470 BCE (Özgen, Öztürk & Mellink 1996: 47). This was a time when Lycia was a borderland oscillating between Greek and Persian powers, as reflected in the material culture and iconography of the period. Vibrant paintings decorate the northern, southern, and western walls of the tomb, depicting a combat scene (N), an ekphora procession (S) and a dining scene (W). In each, the deceased dignitary is depicted at the center, dining, fighting, or riding on a throne-chariot during what seems to be the procession event for his own funeral (Mellink 1973: 301). The deceased dignitary is accompanied by servants and his wife (W), attendants of the procession (S), and the soldiers of his and the opposing army (N) (Mellink 1972: 263–268). The depiction of the figures, their clothing, and accessories contains affinities with the stylistic traditions of Greece, Anatolia, and Persia, leading Machteld Mellink to advance the theory that “it is possible that the dignitary buried in the Karaburun tomb indeed fought in the Persian army against some of the Ionians” (Mellink 1972: 268). If Mellink’s interpretation is correct, the owner of the Karaburun II tomb was a local ruler answering to the Persian political elite, and clashing with his Anatolian neigh-

bors in the meantime. In the dining scene on the western wall (Fig. 8), the deceased dignitary is depicted in Anatolian-style clothing (as identified by Mellink), wearing Persian-style jewelry and balancing an Achaemenid bowl with his left hand (Özgen, Öztürk & Mellink 1996: 47). He is approached by two servants carrying vessels, which closely resemble the Apadana reliefs (Mellink 1972: 265). While it is impossible (and in vain) to try to match stylistic details to ethnic identities in antiquity, the Karaburun tomb captures the hybrid identities at play in the Anatolian borderlands of the Persian Empire. Here, a local elite communicated with the imperial center and with local and neighboring communities by demonstrating his adoption of specific sets of material practices involving food and drink consumption—signaled by the Achaemenid bowl—while also maintaining Anatolian elements.

Returning to the Hittite case, the interest of the Yalburt Survey region residents in a specific set of material practices of food consumption may be interpreted in a bilateral way that considers the agency of both imperial strategies and the local context. As a result of a complex set of encounters, the residents of the Ilgın Plain targeted specific types of eating and drinking practices widespread in the Hittite center, while their strategies of food storage and ritual seem unchanged.



Figure 8 The deceased owner of Karaburun II, depicted in dining on the western wall. Photograph by Machteld J. Mellink (copyright owned by Bryn Mawr College, made available for public use through Shared Shelf Commons; retrieved from <https://library.artstor.org/asset/BRYN_MAWR_955_955_1680978>).

EMBODYING THE EMPIRE IN EMAR

The Hittites expanded into northern Syria following the conquest of the Mittani Kingdom in the fourteenth century BCE by Suppiluliuma I, who installed Šattiwaza on the Mittani throne along with his own daughter as the queen (Beckman 1999: 40, §7).¹⁷ The treaty between these two kings suggests that the conquest extended Hatti's borders to Mt. Lebanon and the Euphrates River. The first point of Hittite oversight for the entire region was Carchemish; Suppiluliuma

¹⁷ The exact dating of Suppiluliuma I's campaign to Syria is a point of scholarly debate (see Cohen 2017: 295, n.1 for a recent review).

appointed one of his sons to its throne (Beckman 1999: 41, §10). Thus, Carchemish was the regional center that governed the area on a daily basis (Beckman 2007: 163–164). Northern Syria and the Levantine coasts feature many cities with extensive LBA levels and long histories of archaeological research, including Ugarit (Ras Shamra) and Alalakh (Tell Atchana) (see Casana 2017 for a recent review). All these cities display very different trajectories under Hittite rule. This suggests that we should not think of the entirety of northern Syria and the Levantine coast as one single homogenous entity, but rather evaluate each city within its long-term trajectory by taking its pre-Hittite levels into account as well.

The city of Emar (Meskene-Qadime or Eski Meskene) is located on the western bank of the Euphrates, 100 km east-southeast of Aleppo. The ruins of Emar were discovered during the construction of the Tabqa Dam, which ultimately flooded parts of the site (Fig. 9). Following initial salvage research that brought to light a significant number of well-published texts, the Syrian Antiquities Department renewed its interest in the site. In 1996, the Department launched a collaboration with the University of Tübingen on a new series of excavations, which produced a more detailed understanding of the archaeology of the site, and the production of a topographical plan including the Lower Town, the Upper Town, and the Temple District (Finkbeiner 1999–2000; 2001; 2002; Finkbeiner & Sakal 2003; 2010).

A diachronic analysis of Emar throughout the second millennium BCE demonstrates strong continuity in local lifeways. The LBA pottery assemblage unearthed during the French salvage expeditions, for instance, is very comparable to both the EBA and the MBA material at the site, with only very few technological and artistic changes observable during the second millennium BCE (Caubet 1982; 2014: 75). This continuity also situates Emar within the larger Middle Euphrates region, along with sites like Mari, which provide consistent continuity in assemblages from the late third millennium BCE to the end of the Bronze Age (Caubet 2014: 72; Otto 2014; Brown & Wilkinson 2017: 149–150). This view is shared by the findings of the Syrian-German team. In both the MBA and the LBA pottery assemblages from the Upper Town, the closest parallels come from other Middle Euphrates sites such as Hadīdī, Munbāqa, Umm el-Marra, and Al-Qiṭār (Finkbeiner 2001: 63–73; Sakal 2018: 67, 71, 84).¹⁸ Within this repertoire, there is no favoring of central Anatolian ceramic trajectories. The same applies for architecture as well. Temples built during the Hittite control, for instance, continued to use the plans typical since the EBA (Sakal 2016: 301). In fact, if we did not have any textual evidence detailing the relationship between Emar and the Hittite state, the material setting would give us very little indication of the Hittite power exerted over the city.¹⁹ Fortunately, the extensive textual evidence found from Emar gives us a detailed look into its administrative, social, and ritual lives.

The detailed archives from Emar reveal a fracture in the administrative system, marking administration as a venue in which we can explore the impact of the Hittite Empire on the city. The textual evidence we have about and from Emar throughout the third and second millennia BCE point to a non-centralized tradition of local administration. Emar does not seem to have had a king with full authority at any point in its Bronze Age life. (Archi 1990; Adamthwaite 2001: 181–182; Fleming 2004). The so-called “Elders” of the city appear in many transactions in Emar as an institution

18 Intense looting at the site of Emar after the French excavations made it very difficult for the Syrian-German team to excavate undisturbed contexts dating to the second millennium BCE. While this evidence is self-admittedly incomplete, a recent article by Ferhan Sakal presents a sequence for the entire second millennium BCE, especially from the Upper Town (Sakal 2018).

19 Notable exceptions to Anatolian material culture present in LBA Emar are two stamp seals (Sakal 2018: 84).

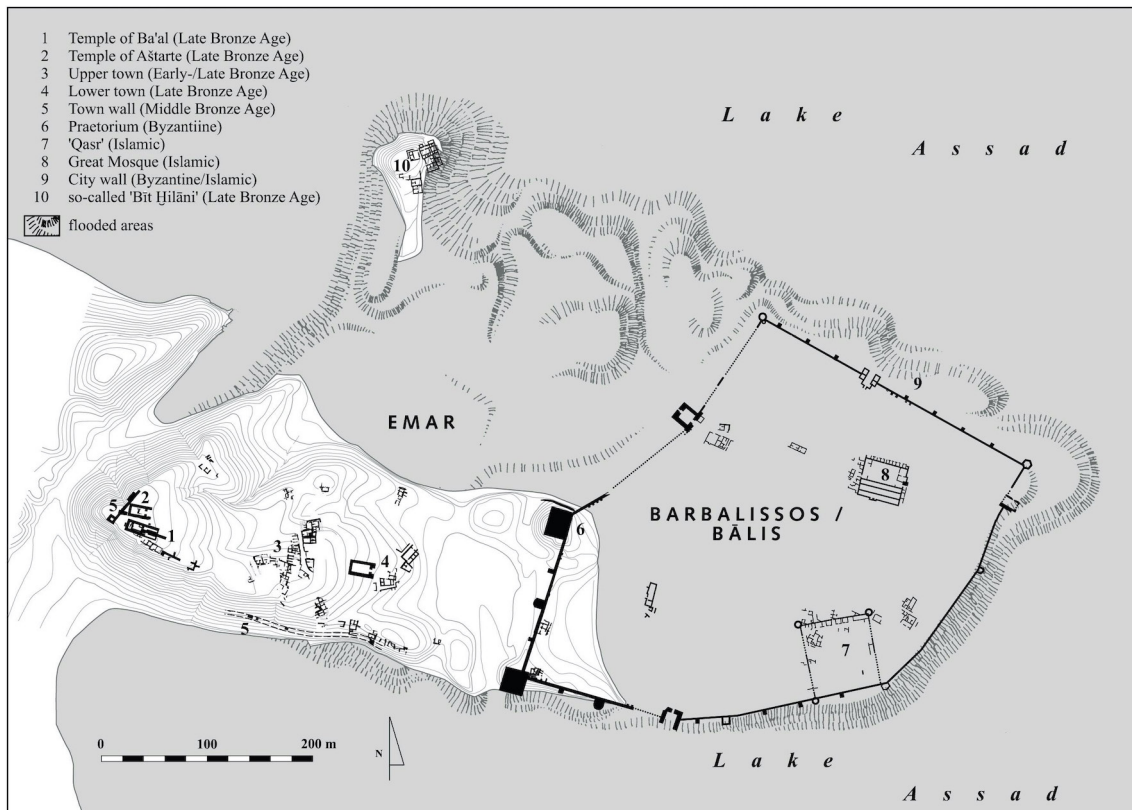


Figure 9 General plan of Emar, medieval Barbalissos and Islamic Balis (Sakal 2016: 300, Fig. 1).
Courtesy of Ferhan Sakal.

confiscating and selling real estate throughout the Bronze Age (Yamada 1994; Beckman 1997: 105; Adamthwaite 2001: 189–190; Viano 2010: 267), while the body known as the “Brothers” continued to impose penalties under Hittite occupation as well (Adamthwaite 2001: 191). Hittite power in Emar was mostly of an itinerant nature with officials such as the “Overseer of the Country” and the “Son of the King” (Bunnens 1989: 26; Beckman 2007: 165). These were both officials introduced with the Hittite rule to the region, but they oversaw the entirety of northern Syria, meaning that they would not be based in Emar throughout the year (Bunnens 1989: 26; Beckman 2007: 165). As will be argued below, there were no administrative buildings permanently associated with these roles, and no Hittite monuments were found in Emar or its close vicinity. In the absence of enduring markers of their power in the urban landscape, these itinerant officials would not be permanent enactors and reminders of Hittite power.

Within the whole of the administrative system, one single office was specifically targeted and exploited by the Hittite central administration: the office of the Diviner.²⁰ Divination, a common practice in the ancient Near East, was a way of interpreting natural phenomena (such as flights of birds or the appearance of the intestines of sacrificed animals) that were believed to transmit important information in an extraordinary way (Rutz 2013: 1). Emar texts, however,

20 Owing to the nature of their work, much of the scholarship on ancient Mesopotamia refer to Diviners as cultic officials. However, in this paper, I read the Diviner’s office as one imbued with political power, especially after the Hittite intervention. While the reasons of this power lay in the cultic and religious realm, the enactment of this power carried the office of the Diviner into the political milieu.

demonstrate that the Diviners of the city were: “local religious specialists who took on a prestigious title, Diviner, that carried with it a host of associations: as actors with connections to loci of political power and influence, as participants in, and preservers of, ritual practices, and as possessors of specialized bodies of knowledge that could be reproduced through education” (Rutz 2013: 321). The Diviners of Emar seem to have entertained a privileged position before the Hittite intervention to the city. In the Ritual of Six Months, the Diviner receives payments and allocations after almost each step (Fleming 2000: 29–30).²¹ These allocations frequently include the hides of the sacrificed animals, suggesting that the Diviner was able to access and accumulate items of value not directly related with divination (Fleming 2000: 268–275).

It is clear that the political elite of the Hittite Empire identified the importance of the Diviner within the power structure of the city, and targeted him as the main agent through which they ran the imperial intervention.²² The results of this intervention included a significant increase in the power wielded by the Diviner himself (Thames, Jr. 2020: 289–299). One of the Diviners whom we know by name is Zū-Ba’la, whose family continued to fulfill the role of the Diviner of the city for another four generations until the final destruction of the city, thus accounting for the period *c.* 1285–1175 BCE (Cohen & d’Alfonso 2008: 20, Table 6). A text [SMEA 45,1 (Msk 73.1097)] demonstrates that a Hittite king intervened on behalf of Zū-Ba’la in a dispute between him and Alziyamuwa, possibly a Hittite official at Emar, who wanted to confiscate Zū-Ba’la’s house and to impose on him tax labor; Zū-Ba’la complained to the Hittite king, who subsequently wrote to Alziyamuwa, ordering him to stop his oppression (Yamada 1998: 325–326; Salvini & Trémouille 2003). This interaction points to the close and personal ties that the Diviner’s family had with the Hittite administration.

A detailed look at Emar’s textual corpus affirms the intimate connections the Diviners of the city had with the Hittite administration. The LBA archives of Emar demonstrate two different scribal traditions. The first, named Syrian in scholarly literature, was a distinct style which used the tablet across its short side, put mostly Syrian-style seals on the margins, and showed Old Babylonian affiliations in their paleography and orthography. This tradition spans the entire reigns of the Emar kings and exists before the Hittite intervention in the city. The corpus of Syrian texts includes a significant percentage of land sale documents. In this corpus, all occasions of kings acting as witnesses and using the ^dNIN.URTA seal of the city belong to the Syrian

21 While it is not possible to exactly date the period when this text was written down, the *Ritual Text for Six Months* (Emar 446) has been argued to encapsulate local traditions and shows no signs of foreign influence, according to Daniel Fleming (2000: 150). One of the manuscripts for the *zukru* festival (Emar 375A) and Emar 446 are the only Syrian-type ritual texts from the city’s archives, while the rest were composed in the Syro-Hittite style (Fleming 2000: 113; see Thames, Jr. 2020: 18–20 for a detailed discussion of Emar 375A). Both rituals also employ the calendrical system used in the Syrian-type legal documents, which was abandoned after the Hittite conquest (Fleming 2000: 113; Thames, Jr. 2020: 20). Fleming (2000: 45, n. 115) dates Emar 446 to the earlier Late Bronze Age, and suggests that it antecedes many other ritual tablets from the city, situating the Diviner as a powerful figure already before the arrival of the Hittite oversight.

22 A comprehensive book on Emar’s *zukru* ritual was published by John Tracy Thames, Jr. (2020) just as I was making the final edits on this paper. Thames, Jr.’s work starts with a detailed philological treatment of the *zukru* texts, and branches out to a contextual reading of the ritual. I was excited to see that we share similar conclusions, especially regarding the prominence of the office of the Diviner during the Hittite rule of Emar (Thames, Jr. 2020: 289–299). Thames, Jr. elegantly demonstrates the Hittite influence and interest in the cultic life of the city, which he interprets as follows: “In light of the recognition of Emar’s importance vis-à-vis Assyria, the Hittite rulers bolstered their commitment to the local government of Emar and reinforced the town’s local identity, while also encouraging a certain cosmopolitanism that results from recognizing one’s place in the larger realm” (Thames, Jr. 2020: 306).

style. The Syro-Hittite documents, on the other hand, do not have a distinct cuneiform style of their own, and they are only defined in opposition to the Syrian style. These texts use the tablet in landscape orientation, they employ Syro-Hittite seals, and they demonstrate a stronger affiliation with Middle Babylonian cuneiform conventions. This corpus is limited to the final four generations of kings in Emar (Wilcke 1992; Skaist 1998; Seminara 1998: 9–20; Cohen 2005: 197–198; Faist 2008; Fleming 2008: 28–29; Fleming & Démare-Lafont 2009: 21–24). The “Syrian” type represents a conventional style that had a much smaller distribution area than the misleading term “Syria” suggests, and appears also in Ekalte (Tell Munbaqa) and Azu (Tell Hadidi). The Syro-Hittite documents, on the other hand, are without comparison elsewhere in northern Syria, although a limited amount of parallels can be found with some older documents from Ugarit. Emar’s free format documents rather give the impression of being texts that were drawn up for specific circumstances, without much consideration of adhering to a set of canons or norms (Fleming & Démare-Lafont 2009: 24–26). During the reign of Pilsu-Dagan, the production of Syro-Hittite documents increased in number, which was interpreted as a growing Hittite effect on Emar (van Exel 2010: 77).

The Diviner Zū-Ba‘la and the rest of his family produced texts only of the so-called Syro-Hittite type (Yamada 1998; Ikeda 1998; Faist 2008: 196). The differentiation between Syrian and Syro-Hittite documents was not a polar opposition, as this delineation clearly exists only in the genre of legal texts, in which the differentiation was first crafted (Rutz 2013: 314–316). Many tablets fall in between these two different styles, while almost all the lexical texts in the Emar M1 archive have copies in both Syrian and Syro-Hittite styles (Rutz 2013: 315). Even then, however, the tendency of Zū-Ba‘la and his family to produce documents that are more easily identified as Syro-Hittite draws attention to the different modes of scribal training, which was overall a state-administered process in Hittite central Anatolia (Weeden 2011: 117). Zū-Ba‘la and his family’s commitment to a distinctly non-local scribal tradition, therefore, can be read as a political decision.

Conceptualizing the Diviner as an imperial administrator rather than a merely cultic figure sheds light on the administrative urban landscape as well. One aspect shared by both local (Elders, Brothers) and imperial (Overseer of the Country, Son of the King) administrative offices at Emar was the lack of any structures identifiable as exclusively “administrative,” since all the finds point to temples and domestic structures.²³ Administrative structures with archives, storage facilities, and monumental architecture, however, are well known from Hittite central Anatolia, from both the capital city Hattusa and the provincial capitals of the empire, such as Ortaköy. While there is always the possibility of the existence of such buildings that have yet to be discovered archaeologically, the textual corpus we have from Emar does not contain many references to such structures either.²⁴ One plausible explanation has been to reconsider temples and residential buildings from

23 During the French excavations, Jean-Claude Margueron (1977) had identified Chantier A as a *bīt hilani*, which he interpreted as a palace belonging to the Hittite administration. However, both the material culture and the nature of the texts found in this building argue against its interpretation as a palace (Faist 2008: 203). In fact, Margueron’s idea of a *bīt hilani* palace was augmented by his view that such a building reflected close links with the Hittite world. However, there is only one possible *hilani* from Late Bronze Age central Anatolia: Building E at Büyükkale, which cannot be definitely identified as a *hilani*. On the contrary, *hilani* is a Syrian phenomenon, which was on the rise in the first millennium BCE (Genz 2006: 503).

24 Texts from Emar do make mention of a local palace (Fleming 2012: 101). However, such a building was not found in the excavations, suggesting that it was either not as monumental as the examples in other LBA centers or it was located in a lower part of town, both interpreted to suggest “a monarchy of somewhat modest importance” (Thames, Jr. 2020: 7).

the site as dynamic places with changing functions and associations. While the Elders could meet with ^dNIN.URTA at the temple, the Brothers could have met in their houses (Otto 2008: 722, 725). This would mean that the structures in which administrative work was undertaken would also have shifted with the changing members and roles of the Elders and the Brothers.

The exception to the shifting topography of power would again be the Diviner. Building M1 housed the family of the Diviner throughout the Hittite occupation,²⁵ which would make it the only building within the urban landscape that housed the sole sedentary imperial office. Apart from M1 and the Diviner, imperial power in Emar was based on individuals who carried out their administrative duties and meetings in shifting domestic places, as opposed to certain structures that would house administration. Imperial power in Emar was based on and drawn from individuals, not from places. In fact, the urban landscape of Emar demonstrates a remarkable continuity throughout the Bronze Age. The inhabitants of Emar continued to extend their ancestral households as their families enlarged through acquiring the nearby properties (Mori 2008: 117–119). The anxiety over having a spatial continuity in the urban landscape is visible in the sale documents where strangers were figuratively “adopted” in order to make the sale of neighboring plots to different families valid (Zaccagnini 1992: 36). These aliens would be fictively called “brothers” or “sons,” and the sale would thus be qualified as “pre-mortem inheritance” within the family. This tradition is known from many documents from Nuzi, Ugarit, and Mari, and thus situates the fictive adoption of aliens for sale purposes as a wider regional phenomenon (Zaccagnini 1992: 36). An example is Emar VI, 213, where Ḫudi, wife of Abi’u, says “herewith my house, vines, including Ḫazirtu her daughter (and) all my assets, I give (them) to Battu, my daughter.”²⁶ Later in the text, it is evident that Ḫudi was indebted after the death of her husband, and none of the brothers of his husband “showed respect” to her, but Ba’al-Malik the Diviner did, and paid off Ḫudi’s debts and acquired her house. Ḫudi married her daughter Battu to Ba’al-Malik, thus forming a real kinship for the continuity of the house. She moved on to call Ba’al-Malik “son” for the rest of the text.²⁷ Through examples like this, the urban landscape of Emar was almost the spatial counterpart of family trees, a map of kinship relations. Thus, imperial Hittite power was cast on already existing and complicated nets of local practices and power relationships structured in space in Emar.

This very individual-based understanding of the Hittite Empire is in stark contrast to other examples of imperialism, such as the one followed by the Roman Empire in Anatolia and northern Syria roughly a millennium and a half after Emar’s abandonment. In addition to other mechanisms of the empire, including individuals, offices, and religion, the Roman Empire was also embodied in its architecture and engineering: in the arch, the aqueduct, and the monument (Mattingly 1997; 2011). Here, I do not suggest that these mechanisms were invented by the Roman Empire or that these monuments were necessarily making people “Roman,” if that was

25 Building M1 has been interpreted in multiple ways. French excavations at the site identified this building as a temple, which gained some currency in the literature to follow (Margueron 1975: 65–66), Fleming (2000) suggested that it was used as a shared public space and a “House of the Gods,” while Arnaud (1980) put forth the interpretation of a scriptorium of a temple. Drawing from the similarities of Building M1 with other domestic buildings at Emar, and its differences from the temples in the city, as well as the scant amount of material culture excavated from the building, Matthew Rutz (2013: 305–308) convincingly demonstrated that Building M1 should indeed be identified as a domestic structure rather than a temple or library on the grounds of both its architecture and material culture.

26 Translation by author following Arnaud 1986: 226.

27 Translation by author following Arnaud 1986: 226.

ever possible, but rather that the Roman Empire chose to mark its presence with an architectural imprint. Its success in using such tools to do so is the topic of another conversation. The Hittite Empire, on the other hand, made no effort to mark its presence in the urban landscape. The few monuments erected in the Bronze Age throughout northern Syria are almost all in the rural landscape, and as far as we know none are located in the vicinity of Emar. The empire remained uninterested in making its presence felt with urban interventions and monuments in Emar and instead relied heavily on individuals for support in its imperial strategies.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I presented two cases where the borderlands were utilized as generators of identities for an empire, as opposed to being used as the “other” to foster a unified Hittite identity at the center. The ways of being Hittite were in flux and reinvented in each new situation and locale. Along with these new definitions, new sets of power relationships were established with material, spatial, or administrative correlations. While the identity of the Hittite Empire in the Yalburt region was at least partly performed through communal consumption and thus ended up in the adoption of specific types of Hittite vessels, the Hittite Empire in Emar was tied to the individuals occupying the office of the Diviner and was not reflected in material practices except for scribal affinities with north-central Anatolia.

The different strategies of the Hittite Empire in the two examples discussed above demonstrate the altering of the imperial practices as a result of analyzing and understanding the local diachronic histories in each region. Building on already existing networks of power, Hittites employed flexible strategies that were conditioned by the realities, meanings, and systems of the borderlands. Similarly, the responses of the borderlands to Hittite imperialism were not the same, and local manifestations of power still existed independently. In the Yalburt Survey Project region, material links with western neighbors outside of the Hittite sphere of influence continued on a diminished scale, with local rulers commissioning landscape monuments contesting the power of Hatti’s kings. At Emar, traditional administrative offices continued, while the LBA material culture of the city repudiates Hittite influence.

The different manifestations of the Hittite Empire that emerge from my analysis demonstrate that the diversity inherent in the borderlands of LBA Anatolia and northern Syria resist perspectives that analyze them from a single vantage point. If, for instance, one engages with only material culture, the Hittite Empire in Emar would be invisible. Similarly, a mere focus on the textual material would not be able to illuminate the imperial dynamics at play in the Ilgın Plain. The borderlands of the Hittite Empire thus prove that a comparative and diachronic approach that pursues material culture, textual records, landscapes, and architectural spaces has the potential to place imperialism in its local contexts, enabling study of the diverse identities the empire took on in different regions.

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