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ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN STUDIES

SUPPLEMENT 55

ALALAKH AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

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K. Aslihan YENER and Tara INGMAN

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- Alalakh in the Past, Atchana in the Present: Situating Site and City 3
K. Aslihan YENER, Murat AKAR and Tara INGMAN
- Making Use of the Past: The Possibilities of Archaeological Archives 13
Hélène MALOIGNE

TEXTUAL RECORDS

- Linguistic and Political Borders in the Period of the Ebla Archives 31
Alfonso ARCHI
- The Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions of the Amuq 41
David HAWKINS
- The Jurisdiction of Legal Transactions at Middle Bronze Age Alalah 55
Jacob LAUINGER

COMPARATIVE MATERIAL CULTURE

- The Ostentatious Use of Obsidian in Bronze Age Mesopotamia, Anatolia and the Northern Levant 75
Elizabeth HEALEY
- A Glass Production Centre in Central Anatolia? Büklükale in Relation to Alalakh and Mesopotamia 103
Kimiyoishi MATSUMURA
- Carnelian, Agate, Amber and Other Gemstones: Production and Exchange in Late Bronze Age Alalakh 117
Magda PIENIAŻEK
- Reconsidering the Alalakh Frescoes within their Levantine Context 141
Constance VON RUDEN
- Symbolic Messaging and Incised Signs on Bronze: A Cache of Middle–Late Bronze I Weapons from Alalakh 171
K. Aslihan YENER

CERAMIC STUDIES

Alalakh and the Aegean: Five Centuries of Shifting but Enduring Contacts	201
Robert B. KOEHL	
12th Century BC Painted Pottery at Alalakh: Local Development and Foreign Contact	225
Mariacarmela MONTESANTO	
Drinking in Iron Age Atchana	249
Marina PUCCI	

ALALAKH AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

Oylum Höyük and Alalakh: Cultural Relations in the Second Millennium BC . .	275
Atilla ENGIN	
The Sacred Mountain of Ugarit and Alalah? Mount Kasion and Related Issues . .	307
John HEALEY	
The Dawn and Demise of Imperial Impact – Tell Atchana vs. Arslantepe in the Framework of the Hittite Expansion and Dissolution	317
Federico MANUELLI	
Tell Afis and its Plain: A Route to the Amuq and the Mediterranean	343
Stefania MAZZONI	
The Two Sides of the Amanus: Cilicia and the Amuq: A Comparative Chronology	367
Mirko NOVÁK, in collaboration with Ekin KOZAL, Sabina KULEMANN-OSEN and Deniz YAŞIN	

SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS AT ALALAKH

Mortuary Practices and GIS Modelling at Tell Atchana, Alalakh	389
Tara INGMAN	
Speiss'ing Things Up: Iron Arsenide in a Secondary Production Context at Tell Atchana	407
Michael JOHNSON	
A General Outlook on the Connections between Alalakh and Cyprus in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages: Textual, Archaeological and Archaeometric Studies	419
Ekin KOZAL, Sinem HACIOSMANOĞLU, Mustafa KIBAROĞLU and Gürsel SUNAL	

CONTENTS

vii

Come and Hear My Story: The 'Well-Lady' of Alalakh	433
Rula SHAFIQ	
Chemical Characterisation of Mycenaean Pottery from Alalakh via ICP-MS . . .	453
Sıla MANGALOĞLU-VOTRUBA and Cansu YILDIRIM	

SUMMARY

Fifteen Years of Renewed Research at Tell Atchana: Some Final Thoughts	475
Geoffrey SUMMERS	

THE DAWN AND DEMISE OF IMPERIAL IMPACT – TELL ATCHANA VS. ARSLANTEPE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE HITTITE EXPANSION AND DISSOLUTION

Federico MANUELLI

ABSTRACT*

Despite the differences in their geographical locations and cultural contexts, the sites of Alalakh and Arslantepe were both involved in the interaction network of the Late Bronze Age kingdoms and early empires. The historical events that affected the regions of south and southeastern Anatolia during the second half of the second millennium BC have especially left their imprint in the archaeological record of the two sites. This paper presents an overview of fortification systems and settlement management, luxury goods and iconography, as well as pottery production and glyptic material from Alalakh Periods 3-0 and Arslantepe IV-III, in order to analyse how these sites reacted to the impact of the expansion of the Hittite Empire and also how they developed after the collapse of the centralised polity, during a time frame stretching between 1400 and 1100 BC. The comparison offers new insights into the complexity of cross-cultural relations in the framework of imperial expansion and demise.

AN IMPERIAL NETWORK AND ITS DISRUPTION

In the introduction of the first volume dedicated to the results of the renewed excavations at Tell Atchana, in the framework of early empires' expansionist mechanisms, Aslihan Yener poses the following question: "What are the archaeological cognates of empire?"¹ The aim of this contribution is to explore this matter, offering an overview of the elements of the archaeological record that can be considered to be indicators of the materialisation of practices of power and forms of imperial expansion.²

The analysis focuses on Tell Atchana/Alalakh and Arslantepe/Malitya by comparing the evidence of the impact of Hittite material culture from these sites. Although characterised by remarkable differences, Alalakh and Arslantepe were both affected by the Hittite expansionist policy and, in specific phases of their history, were tangibly a part of Ḫatti. This chapter aims at stressing similarities and differences at the two sites, in order to provide a

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¹ Yener 2010, pp. 5–6.

² For a discussion of the topic, see Matthews 2003, pp. 127–132.

better comprehension of the complexity of Hittite cultural influence and political management in the southern and southeastern peripheries of the empire.

Hittite imperial administration and territorial control beyond the central Anatolian plateau is a matter that nowadays is still difficult to define, since textual-historical sources supply only scattered information concerning management outside the Hittite homeland.³ Particularly rich instead is the documentation from Syrian archives, although this mostly shows aspects linked with local institutions and traditions.⁴

Remarkable insights into the topic can be drawn from the analysis of material culture, which provides valuable clues for the reconstruction of the various aspects of ancient societies. Changes in cultural traits, such as the arrival of new artefacts and the adoption of previously unknown means of production, as well as the introduction of foreign architectural layouts and techniques, can indeed be the result of external influences.⁵ Moreover, the materialisation of social distinction and the legitimisation of power, such as the erection of large-scale public works and high-profile projects, as well as the ostentation of new prestige and symbolic goods, can specifically reflect the emergence of new dominant groups and their need to display their social status.⁶

In this framework, several recent studies have focused on analysing the expression of political power and its manifestation in specific vehicles; for example, landscape management, iconography, ceremonial behaviours and monumentality.⁷ In the specific case of the expansion of the Hittite Empire, the intertwining material and textual evidence has recently been analysed to shed light on modes of imperial-local interaction.⁸

The examination of the weight of Hittite influence in the archaeological records of Alalakh and Arslantepe offers the possibility to better comprehend the relationships between the Hittite motherland and its borderlands. It furthermore allows us to inspect the differences in the interaction between the two sites and the imperial system and how each site developed after that system's decay, improving our understanding of extra-regional relationships and the degree of centralised control.

ALALAKH VS. ARSLANTEPE DURING THE 14TH–12TH CENTURIES BC

The mounds of Tell Atchana and Arslantepe are separated by more than 400 km of road (**Fig. 1**). Tell Atchana is on a strategic passageway between Anatolia and Syria and, due to its connection to the sea via the Orontes River, belonged to a dynamic environment where the eastern Mediterranean and northern Mesopotamian cultures merged.⁹ On the other

³ See van den Hout (2012, pp. 44–47) and also the overview provided by Bryce (2011, pp. 89–97), with related bibliographies.

⁴ For a reconstruction of the development of the Hittite administration in Syria, see d'Alfonso (2011, pp. 173–174). See Cohen (2009, pp. 13–18) and Neu (1995) for Emar and Ugarit, respectively.

⁵ See Gramsch 2015 for a wide discussion on the topic.

⁶ Daloz 2007, pp. 27–28.

⁷ See Casana 2013, Bonatz 2007, Gilibert 2011 and Osborne 2014, respectively.

⁸ See Glatz 2009.

⁹ Yener 2005, pp. 1–4.



Fig. 1. Map of the Anatolia plateau and northern Syria showing the places mentioned in the text.

hand, Arslantepe is the most important site in the Upper Euphrates region: it stands in the fluvial plain between the Taurus and the Anti-Taurus chains, a border zone where a variety of influences from the central Anatolian, Syro-Mesopotamian and Transcaucasian worlds converged.¹⁰

Routes and communication networks are essential in this scenario. The Amuq Valley and the Malatya Plain are both regions framed by highlands, but in both cases, they are accessible from the Hittite homeland through strategic passages. The Cilician Gates permit crossing the Taurus piedmont into Cilicia southwards, then proceeding through the Belen pass, which gives direct access through the Amanus range to the Amuq Valley.¹¹ On the other hand, the small valleys south of the eastern part of the Kızılırmak River bend allow connections with the Kuru Çay and the Tohma Çay flows, reaching the northeastern part of the Malatya plain.¹²

The geographical location of the two sites, in regions standing between different natural and cultural environments, allowed over the centuries a spontaneous interaction with the surrounding regions and the penetration of foreign influences that merged with aspects of local traditions.

¹⁰ Frangipane and Liverani 2013, pp. 349–350.

¹¹ Gates 2013, pp. 96–97.

¹² Ökse 2000, pp. 110–111.

Field activities at Alalakh and Arslantepe have followed different paths, although with a common line of development. While excavations at Alalakh were fully interrupted for around 50 years after the expeditions of Sir C. Leonard Woolley, at Arslantepe, investigations have been continuously carried on by the Italian Expedition since 1961, after the *c.* 20 year break following the activities conducted at the site by Louis Delaporte.¹³ Research on the second millennium BC levels of Arslantepe was neglected due to the extraordinary findings belonging to the late-prehistoric phases, and has only recently resumed after almost 40 years.¹⁴ Although with notable distinctions, the renewed activities at both sites faced the enormous and sometimes insurmountable difficulty of anchoring the exceptional discoveries brought to light in the past within the reliable new sequences executed with modern methodologies.

Historically, interest in controlling the two cities and their territories started at the time of the Old Hittite Kingdom, towards the end of the 17th century BC. Military expeditions in the Upper Euphrates are attested from the reign of Ḫattušili I, who states that he conquered and destroyed Alalakh.¹⁵ It was not until the military campaigns of Šuppiluliuma I that Alalakh and Arslantepe started to firmly orbit Hittite power. The conquest of Išuwa allowed the Great King to move down the Euphrates towards the lower territories, subjugating Karkemiš and northern Syria.¹⁶ The treaty between Šuppiluliuma and Šattiwaza provides information concerning the fate of northwestern Syria after these events, testifying to a transfer of the territories west of the Euphrates, including Alalakh, from Mitanni to Ḫatti.¹⁷ Moreover, cuneiform documents from Alalakh provide interesting clues about a direct connection between the Hittite sovereigns and those who governed the city, especially during the late 14th century BC.¹⁸

As for the Malatya region, it seems to have been assimilated into the Hittite Empire after the conquest of Išuwa.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the political situation remained unclear, and it seems probable that the territory was managed by the Hittites concurrently with local groups, as a frontier area.²⁰ Indeed, the toponym Malatya is attested in a few tablets from Boğazköy, always in connection with revolts and invasions in the region.²¹

These emerging different situations are a consequence of the dissimilar value conferred by the Hittites upon controlling these distinct regions. Their attention was primarily directed southeastwards, where establishing connections and communication roads with Syria and Mesopotamia was essential, while eastwards their interest was restricted to managing the frontier with the Mitannian and the Middle Assyrian powers.

These historical and geographical circumstances are reflected in specific ways in the material culture from Alalakh and Arslantepe. The phases characterised by the highest visibility

¹³ Delaporte 1940.

¹⁴ For old and new projects at Alalakh and Arslantepe, see Yener 2014 and Frangipane and Liverani 2013, pp. 349–353, respectively.

¹⁵ See de Martino 2010, p. 91; 2003, p. 125.

¹⁶ Torri 2007, pp. 236–237; van Exel 2010, p. 65.

¹⁷ See von Dassow 2008, pp. 62–64.

¹⁸ See Niedeorf 2002, pp. 521–524; von Dassow 2005, pp. 29–30.

¹⁹ See Glocker 2011, pp. 267–273.

²⁰ Liverani 2004, pp. 162–163.

²¹ De Martino 2012, pp. 375–376.

WOOLLEY	YENER	DATE RANGE	1961-1971 Northern Area		2007-2010 Northern Area		1971-83 / 2005-14 Southern Area		Periods and date range
LEVEL 0	PERIOD 0	c.1140							
LEVEL I c Temple only	?	No city							
LEVEL I a-b Temple, Houses	PERIOD 1	1290 – 1290?							
LEVEL II Upper Fortress	PERIOD 2	1330 – 1310? (LB IIa)							
LEVEL III lower Fortress	PERIOD 3	1350 – 1330 (LB IIa)							
POST-IV Castle re-use	PERIOD 3	1400 – 1350 (LB IIa)							
LEVEL IV, LEVEL Vb: Castle/palace	PERIOD 4	1450 – 1400 (LB I)							
LEVEL Va below the Vb complex	PERIOD 5	1525 – 1450 (LB I)							
LEVEL VI a-b	PERIOD 6	1600/1575 -1525 (LB I)							
LEVEL VII	PERIOD 7	1625 -1600/1575 (MB II)							
LEVEL VIII	PERIOD 8	1650 -1625 (MB II)							
			III d ↑ destruction ↑ fortification wall	IIIA 2 ↑ destruction ↑ fortification wall					ARSLANTEPE IIIA EIA I (1200-1000)
			III g-c stone structures	IIIA 1 post-imperial building					
			IV ↑ destruction ↑ fortification wall and gate						
			IV b-a				Phase III	pits	ARSLANTEPE IV LBA II (1400-1200)
			IV d-c round dwelling						
			V a-V pits						
			V c-b burnt layers				Phase II	destruction ↑ dwelling phase 2	ARSLANTEPE VB2 LBA IB (1600-1400)
			V d ↑ destruction ↑ reuse ↑ gate-system ↑ earthen rampart				Phase I	destruction ↑ dwelling phase 1	ARSLANTEPE VB1 LBA IA (1700-1600)

Fig. 2. Sequences at Alalakh (left, courtesy of M. Horowitz) and Arslantepe (right). The grey rows indicate the periods focused on in the text.

of Hittite influence at the sites are the topic of this analysis (Fig. 2). Earlier stages, representing the genesis of this phenomenon, and later ones, following the collapse of the centralised polity, will also be taken into account.

The study of the emergence in the archaeological records of Hittite influence, the peak of its impact, and the moment following its demise, is essential for the reconstruction of the development of relationships between the central Anatolian power and its peripheral territories during its expansion and after its dissolution.

ARCHITECTURE AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS: A COMPLEX MERGING OF INFLUENCES

Architectural remains provide interesting cases of local adaptation of foreign layouts. Monumental and public building construction requires enormous inputs of labour and material, as well as planning, management and organisation. It consequently represents an expression of power by elites, displaying the capacity to realise specific massive projects.²²

At Arslantepe, around the second half of the 17th century BC (late-Period VB1), an earthen rampart, consisting of dumped layers of clayey soil and stone packing, was erected to surround a great part of the mound (Fig. 3). The date of its construction is uncertain, since organic samples used for radiometric analyses, as well as material culture, have been found exclusively in association with structures connected with its final destruction, dated to the 15th century BC.²³ At Alalakh, a huge step-faced rampart, built with earth and clay, also enclosed at least part of the settlement (Fig. 4). Its original plan is unknown but,

²² See Heinz 2006, pp. 136–138.

²³ Manuelli 2013, pp. 41–45, 404–406.



Fig. 3. Arslantepe, the trench dug inside the late-Period VB1 earthen rampart.



Fig. 4. Alalakh, the trench dug inside the Period 7 earthen rampart.
After Woolley 1955, pl. XXXIa.

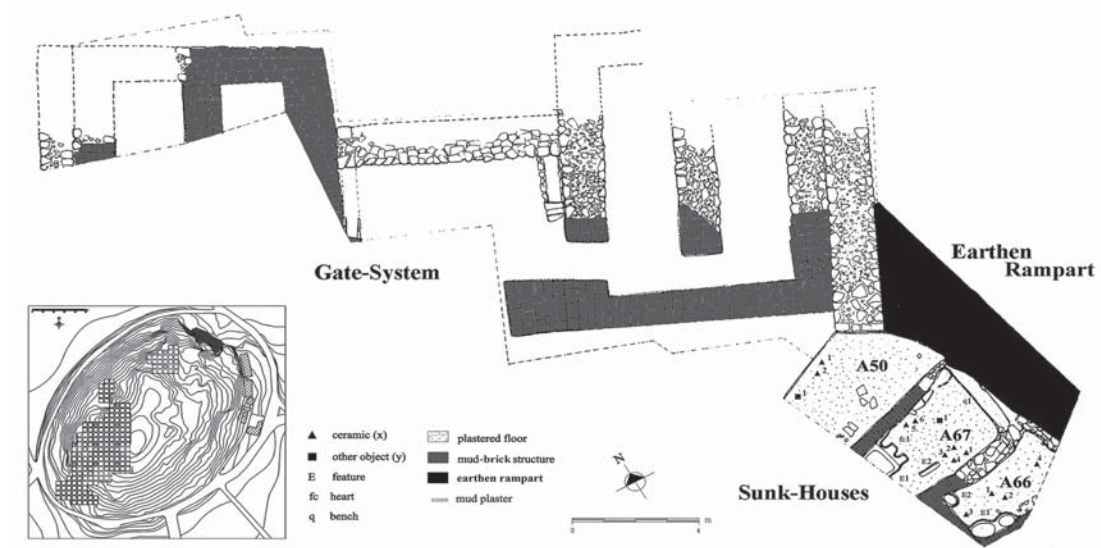


Fig. 5. Arslantepe, the early-Period VB2 gateway.

according to Woolley, it was re-arranged and widened several times, certainly from Levels VII to V, while its presence in the later Levels III-I is debatable.²⁴

Along the top of these ramparts, a high mudbrick wall would have been built. The improvement of the defensibility of the settlements by elevating the base of the fortifications is known from some monumental cases in Hittite centres.²⁵ Yet this arrangement of urban enclosures with earthen ramparts is an architectural device typical of the Levant and Syria, widely diffused from the Middle Bronze Age up to the mid-16th century BC.²⁶

The strength of central Anatolian models is, however, clearly visible in structures incorporated into the city walls. The Arslantepe rampart was provided, probably during the first half of the 16th century BC (early-Period VB2), with a gateway that especially finds comparisons with the Hittite Imperial period.²⁷ This gateway is embedded in the earthen embankment and consists of a large doorway flanked by protruding bipartite towers with mudbrick walls on stone foundations (Fig. 5). A more monumental and magnificent example of this architectural prototype has also been found at Alalakh Level VII.²⁸ It consists of a tri-compartment gateway with massive protruding rectangular towers embedded in the earthen rampart.²⁹ Recent campaigns in the area of Kesikkaya at Boğazköy date the appearance of this type of architectural layout to the early 16th century BC, thus compatible with its adoption in the eastern and southeastern Hittite frontiers.³⁰

²⁴ Woolley 1955, pp. 133–134, 137, 139, 144–145, 155.

²⁵ See Mielke 2011a, p. 180.

²⁶ See Burke 2008, p. 84 and Manuelli 2013, pp. 404–405 with references.

²⁷ Manuelli 2013, pp. 41–45, 404–406. See a discussion in Mielke 2011b, pp. 91–95.

²⁸ Woolley 1955, pp. 147–150, fig. 55, pl. XXIXa.

²⁹ Dardeniz 2016, pp. 32–33, 40–41.

³⁰ See Schachner 2012, pp. 97–99.

Moving to later phases, during the second half of the 14th century BC, Alalakh (Period 2) is marked by the fortification of the city with mudbrick fortresses, wherein multiple influences are reflected (Fig. 6).³¹ The Northern Fortress is an imposing defensive building (possibly never completed) erected on a large platform that incorporates casemate-style voids filled with rubble. The Southern Fortress is a solid construction reinforced by double walls with casemate chambers.

From the point of view of their general layout, these fortresses resemble the typical administrative structures that were widespread in the Hittite homeland, characterised by assemblies of individual buildings connected by courts and using casemate-wall techniques and buttresses.³² However, it is important to stress that the tradition of building fortress-like structures integrated into the line of defence or as free-standing bastions set atop of mounds belongs to the military facilities of the Middle Bronze Age in the Syro-Palestinian region.³³ In any case, the characteristics of the Alalakh fortresses, such as their multi-chambered arrangement and the use of mudbrick foundation platforms, clash with both the modular massive layout of the Syro-Levantine standard and the Hittite building tradition. Murat Akar has thus recently suggested a relationship with the Egyptian military fortresses established in the Levant.³⁴

At a final Late Bronze Age stage, during late-Period IV at Arslantepe, dated to the 13th century BC, a new gate system was built (Fig. 7). Its layout, with a double-chambered gateway, is known from central Anatolian examples.³⁵ However, once again, the arrangement is atypical, since the gateway, instead of being associated with a distinctive casemate wall, is connected with a single large mudbrick wall with a stone foundation.³⁶ Its outline appears thus similar to the early-phase gateway of the “Burnt Level” at Tille Höyük, which has, however, recently been dated to a time following the Hittite collapse.³⁷

The above-mentioned examples illustrate the variety of influences evident in monumental and public architecture, wherein typical Hittite layouts are adopted but, at the same time, merged with Syro-Levantine technologies. Some final hints for a better diachronic understanding of this phenomenon can be provided by taking into account the development of the two sites at the end of the Bronze Age. At Arslantepe, the southern part of the mound starts to be gradually abandoned and used exclusively for waste disposal after the destruction of the Period VB2 settlement, at around the end of the 15th century BC. As a consequence, the town fortification wall of the 13th century BC surrounds only a restricted part of the mound, stressing a definitive change of the settlement modality: from an urban small-sized town to a fortified military Hittite outpost.³⁸

³¹ See Akar 2013, pp. 42–46.

³² See the Hittite administrative buildings excavated at Maşat Höyük, Alaca Höyük and Ortaköy in the synthesis provided by Mielke (2011a, pp. 163–166), with relevant bibliographical references.

³³ See Benati and Zaina 2013, pp. 16–26.

³⁴ Akar 2013, pp. 46–50.

³⁵ See the “Southern Gate” at Büyükkale in Bittel and Naumann (1952, Abb. 22).

³⁶ See Manuelli 2013, pp. 32–34, 47–48, 406 with relevant bibliographical references.

³⁷ Summers 2013, pp. 317–319.

³⁸ Manuelli 2013, pp. 406–409.

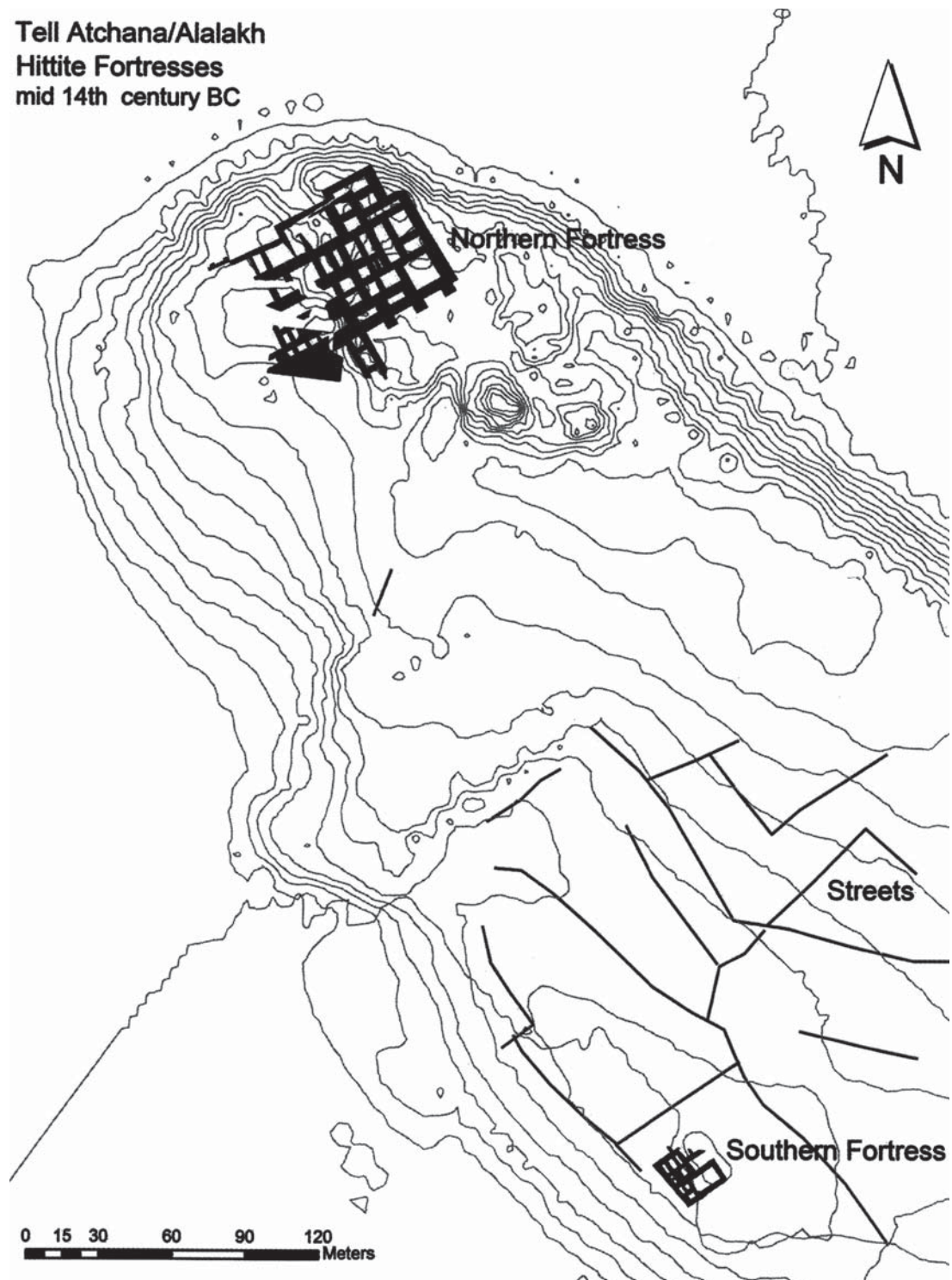


Fig. 6. Alalakh, the Period 2 Hittite Fortresses. After Yener and Akar 2014, p. 265, fig. 1.

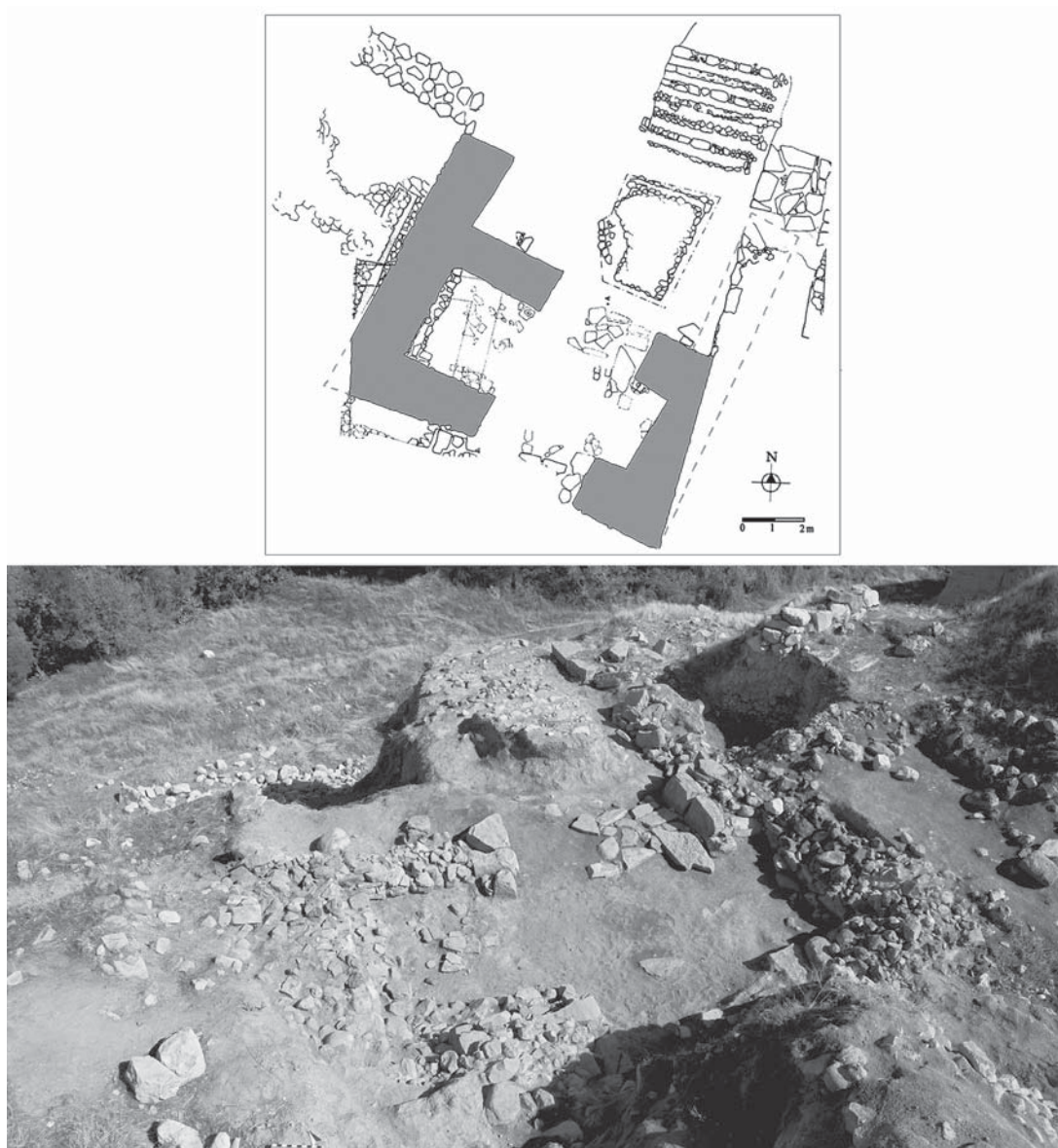


Fig. 7. Arslantepe, the late-Period IV gateway. After the excavations (above) and after the cleaning of the area in 2010 (below).

The cusp of the 13th century BC signals an even more dramatic reorganisation and drastic change at Alalakh, marked by the new arrangement of the Ishtar Temple. It is followed by the almost complete abandonment of the settlement, with the exception of the temple itself and its immediate surroundings.³⁹

The consequences of the above-mentioned changes are visible in the fate of both sites during the 12th century BC. Continuity of the Hittite citadel is attested at Arslantepe during Period IIIA, through a succession of new city walls that overlap the destruction level

³⁹ Yener 2013, pp. 18–19.

of the Late Bronze Age II gateway.⁴⁰ The continuation of the sequence, even if on a more modest scale, has been recently underlined also at Alalakh, where remains of residential architecture attest to a 12th–9th century BC use of the area near the temple.⁴¹

FIGURATIVE RELIEFS AND PRESTIGE OBJECTS: INSIGHTS INTO HITTITE ROYALTY AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY

The merging of local and foreign influences that appears in monumental architecture is probably connected to the fact that the buildings had to deal with specific utilitarian parameters, as well as geographical and environmental aspects, besides being an expression of the authority of the elites commissioning their creation. On the other hand, monumental art, considering its central role in public ceremonies, represents the full expression of a political power, supporting its ideology and contributing strategically to the consolidation of authority.⁴²

The iconography of Hittite monumental art and its related ideology represents the most intriguing form of continuity of a Late Bronze Age tradition into the post-Hittite era. The weight and importance of the memory of the past is perfectly attested at Arslantepe by the presence of the figurative bas-reliefs re-used in the 8th century BC “Lions Gate”.⁴³ The dating and original location of these reliefs have been long debated by scholars.⁴⁴ In light of the new excavations and discoveries at the site, it is now possible to assert, with a certain margin of confidence, that at least some of these sculptures should be originally associated with the previously described Period IIIA and the 12th–11th century BC fortified citadel.⁴⁵

The libation in front of the gods, as well as the rest of the religious themes depicted in the reliefs, follow an iconography attested during the Hittite Imperial period. The Storm-God is the deity most frequently represented on the reliefs (Fig. 8). In the most renowned of them, he drives his eagle-chariot drawn by bulls, following a model well known from several types of media belonging to the Hittite heritage, from rock-monuments to seal impressions, and from ritual to luxury goods.⁴⁶

The Arslantepe reliefs clearly evoke the existence of trends deliberately linked to the past, but why did this form of art develop at the site only during the post-Hittite era? The answer can be found in the geo-political circumstances characterising the site during the Hittite period. On one hand, its location, at the eastern frontier of the empire, did not render it worth the employment of workforces and expertise to build an appropriate ideological apparatus; while on the other, the absence of a local lineage of powerful elites meant that there was no favourable environment for the development of autonomist and self-celebratory

⁴⁰ Liverani 2012, pp. 336–338.

⁴¹ Yener 2013, pp. 11, 20.

⁴² See De Marrais *et al.* 1996, pp. 15–19.

⁴³ See the classification provided by Orthmann (1971, pp. 91–100, 519–523).

⁴⁴ The most up-to-date assessments are provided by Hawkins (2000, pp. 282–329) and Mazzoni (1997, pp. 310–318).

⁴⁵ Manuelli 2016, pp. 28–29.

⁴⁶ See Ehringhaus 2005, pp. 72–76, Abb. 133–136; Herbordt *et al.* 2011, pp. 60–61, Taf. 19, 57; Seher 2007. See also Gilibert 2011, pp. 116–117.



Fig. 8. Arslantepe, “Lions Gate” relief K (approximate scale 1:6). After Delaporte 1940, pl. XXIV.

tendencies in art. It was only after the demise of Hittite authority that the new emerging ruling class had the need to legitimise their power, linking themselves with the prestigious memory of Hittite royalty.

Completely different is the case of the bas-relief of Prince Tuthaliya found at Alalakh, reused face-down, as part of the entryway of the Ishtar Temple in Period 1.⁴⁷ Its original location is associated with the previous late-14th century BC phase of the temple’s *cella* itself, at the time of Great King Muršili II, according to a number of historical synchronisms recently corroborated by the discovery at the site of the new Tuthaliya-Ašnuhepa seal.⁴⁸

On the slab, Tuthaliya is represented walking, followed by his wife and an attendant (Fig. 9). The gesture of adoration of the main figure, raising his fist with thumb forward as a form of greeting to the god, is identical to the one used by the Hittite kings on the reliefs at the “Sphinx Gate” at Alaca Höyük and at Sirkeli 1. According to Dominik Bonatz, the typical iconography of Hittite royalty was used in this context by the high-official regent at Alalakh, probably to demonstrate his respect for Hittite authority itself.⁴⁹

It seems nonetheless difficult to disconnect the meaning of the relief from its final destiny. Why was this symbol of political power disregarded and subjected to a pure act of *damnatio memoriae* such a short time after its creation?⁵⁰ It is of course not easy to determine whether this action of political iconoclasm was committed by the Hittites, locals governed by the Hittites, or locals rejecting Hittite control. The assumption of the transfer of the Hittite governor to another site, based on the fact that the settlement was abandoned during the 13th century BC, does not in any case imply a retraction of the Hittites’ authority from the Amuq region. This suggests that the disrespectful reuse of the slab is not likely

⁴⁷ Woolley 1955, pp. 241–242, pl. 48.

⁴⁸ Yener 2013, pp. 18–19; Yener *et al.* 2014.

⁴⁹ Bonatz 2007, pp. 131–132.

⁵⁰ See Goedegebuure 2012, pp. 427–429 on the topic.



Fig. 9. Alalakh, Prince Tuḫaliya relief (approximate scale 1:10). After Woolley 1955, pl. XLVIIIa.

attributable to locals celebrating the departure of the Hittite overlord, but more probably to an act of disapproval by the Great King of Ḫatti himself, concerning the actions of Tuḫaliya.⁵¹

The early dating of the relief, to the reign of Muṣili II, also seems to support this hypothesis. It is recognised that the relief of Muwatalli II at Sirkeli is the first monumental representation of any Hittite sovereign.⁵² Indeed, very few reliefs carved on a stone block can be dated prior to the 13th century BC, taking into consideration the current inability of research to provide the “Sphinx Gate” at Alaca Höyük with a definitive chronological assessment.⁵³ The Tuḫaliya relief at Alalakh seems thus to testify that the local dignitaries had already acquired, during the late-14th century BC, the symbols representative of the power of the monarchy in Ḫattuša.⁵⁴ In light of these arguments, one can highlight

⁵¹ See Niedorf 2002, pp. 521–524 and de Martino 2010, pp. 93–94 for further discussion.

⁵² Ehringhaus 2005, pp. 95–99.

⁵³ Two fragmentary figurative blocks at Büyükkale seem to have been reused in a building dated to the 15th–14th century BC (Emre 2002, p. 219), while reliefs found in the 13th century BC Level 2 at Kayalıpınar are supposed to have been originally located in earlier structures (Müller-Karpe 2009, pp. 113–114). Moreover, different carved blocks coming from Ortaköy have been found incorporated into buildings dated to the Middle Hittite Kingdom (Süel 2009, pp. 193–194, 202–205). See also the synthesis provided by Gilbert (2015, pp. 137–138) about this topic. Regarding the reliefs from Alaca Höyük see, among the most recent discussions, Taracha (2011, pp. 142–147) with relevant bibliographical references.

⁵⁴ In this framework, it is important to note that in the evolution of the landscape of Hittite monuments recently formulated by Glatz and Plourde (2011, pp. 56–57) using a Costly Signaling Theory approach, the monuments’ construction appears to have started as a strategy not of Hittite great kings, but of princes and officials.

the theory that the king of Hatti himself did not appreciate the self-adulation of the state official (by means of the relief) and ordered its removal, condemning it to rapid oblivion.⁵⁵

Linked to the concept of the manifestation of power is also the circulation of specific metal artefacts, since prestigious items and ceremonial weapons can embed noteworthy symbolic values and testify to the exchange or movement of goods, as well as to emulation between elites.⁵⁶ At Alalakh, several examples of ritual metal weapons were found by Woolley's expedition.⁵⁷ A very interesting object is the three-spiked shaft-hole axe that was found during the new excavations below the topsoil above the Southern Fortress (Fig. 10). It can be compared with a similar specimen of a shaft-hole axe brought to light at Arslantepe from one of the debris layers above the destruction of the Period VB gateway (Fig. 11).

The two objects probably embody similar symbolic values of royal expression, despite the evident differences in the details of their execution and decoration.⁵⁸ Based on comparisons with examples from mainly the central Anatolian world, both weapons can be easily dated to the 14th–13th century BC, and their small dimensions seem to indicate a ceremonial use. This is especially emphasised when taking into consideration the most renowned example of this type of axe, which is the weapon in the hand of the God-warrior carved at the “King's Gate” at Boğazköy.⁵⁹ As has been underlined by Yener, there is no doubt that these objects, considered to be the personal property of a god, represent the materialisation of religious and royal aspects connected with supernatural powers.⁶⁰

SEAL AND POTTERY PRODUCTION: SYMBOLS OF POWER AND MARKS OF CONTROL

Similarly to monumental reliefs, seals are also bearers of symbols used to diffuse royal ideology. Furthermore, seals represent the political apparatus, as well as its management mechanisms, through visual media.⁶¹

The presence of an interesting quantity of biconvex Hittite-style seals, often bearing hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, is attested from Arslantepe Period IV and Alalakh Periods 3-1, reflecting practices of Hittite administration and control at the sites between the 14th and 13th centuries BC (Figs. 12–13). It is especially their association with incised names and titles known from Hittite archives that emphasises the possible presence of officials, probably coming from the capital or from Karkemiš, involved in activities of management and control.⁶²

⁵⁵ See de Martino 2010, p. 94.

⁵⁶ See Yener 2011, pp. 269–270.

⁵⁷ For the most significant objects, see Woolley 1955, p. 276, pl. LXX: AT/36/4, AT/39/305.

⁵⁸ For description and comparisons, see Yener 2011, pp. 266–270 and Manuelli 2013, pp. 216–218, respectively.

⁵⁹ See Lorenz and Schrakamp 2011, pp. 127–138.

⁶⁰ Yener 2011, pp. 269–270. See also the contribution provided by Yener in this volume.

⁶¹ Mora 2014, pp. 435–436.

⁶² For Arslantepe, see Mora (2013, pp. 266–270). For Alalakh, see Woolley (1955, pp. 266–267, pl. LXVII: 155–157, 159, 161) concerning the old excavations and Dinçol (1983, pp. 200–201, 205–206, Taf. XX, XXVI) for seals possibly from Alalakh.

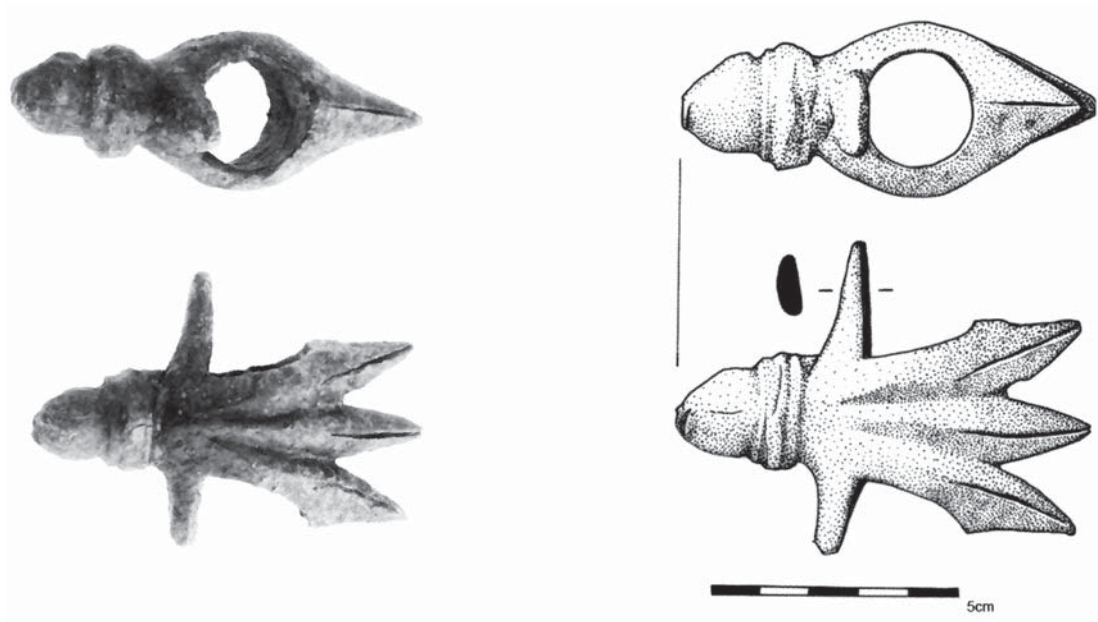


Fig. 10. Alalakh, three-spiked shaft-hole axe from Period 2. After Yener 2011, 267, fig. 26.1.

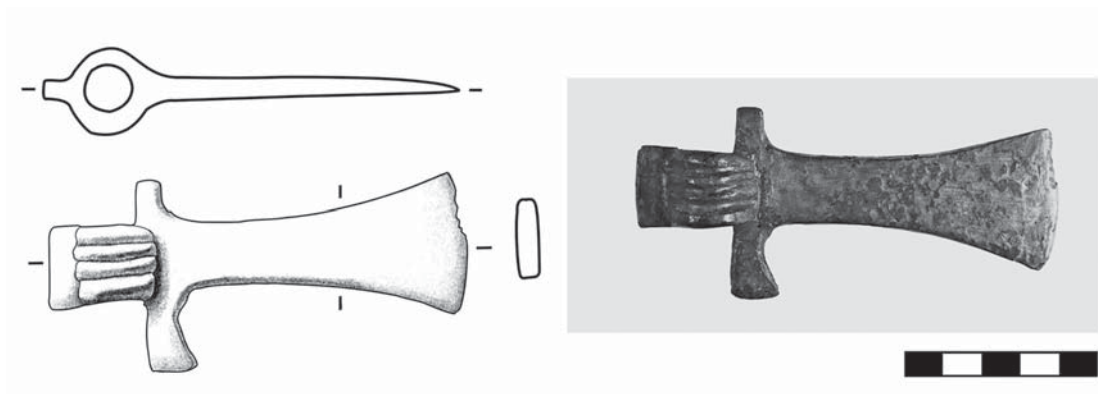


Fig. 11. Arslantepe, shaft-hole axe from early-Period IV.

The use of biconvex seals is also attested during the 12th century BC in some of the provincial areas of the previous Hittite imperial peripheries. Within this category, a series of examples, produced in the Euphrates region, Cilicia and northern Syria, depict stylised figures and signs vaguely similar to hieroglyphs, as a sort of imitation of the earlier inscribed specimens, which have been interpreted as an “unintelligible” or “degenerative” evolution of hieroglyphic signs.⁶³ Their occurrence at both Arslantepe and Alalakh testify to a continuity in the use of administrative practices, but also a possible loss of at least part of the associated symbolic meaning.⁶⁴

⁶³ Mazzoni 2013, p. 575.

⁶⁴ See Mora (2013, pp. 264–266) and Woolley (1955, pp. 266–267, pl. LXVII: 158, 160) for Arslantepe and Alalakh, respectively.



Fig. 12. Arslantepe, selection of biconvex Hittite-style seals from Period IV.



Fig. 13. Alalakh, selection of biconvex Hittite-style seals from Periods 3-1 (approximate scale 1:2).
After Woolley 1955, pl. LXVII: 155, 156, 161.

Concerning this last issue, a noteworthy similarity exists between the development of seals and pottery production in the last centuries of the second millennium BC. During the 14th–13th century BC, the peripheral areas under Hittite control have in common the widespread use of standardised and mass-produced central Anatolian pottery types, usually defined by the term “drab ware”.⁶⁵ Despite the inconsistency in the definition of “drab ware” — that is, the total lack of uniformity in its description and the fact that its characteristics correspond to the most generic traits of the pottery produced during the second half of the second millennium BC in the whole Near Eastern area — a close relationship between mass-produced ceramic shapes and political presence is usually assumed.⁶⁶ Interpretations of the economic and administrative system have been built around this phenomenon, mostly with the (perhaps overly) ambitious aim of associating the spread of standardised artefacts to a single “model” of diffusion.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ See Gates 2011, pp. 396–399.

⁶⁶ See Pucci 2013, p. 100; Archi and Venturi 2012, pp. 9–13.

⁶⁷ See discussion in Manuelli 2013, pp. 401–403.

On the other hand, Arslantepe and Alalakh are just two examples illustrating how archaeological evidence is actually highly heterogeneous. The Hittite expansion at Alalakh during Period 2 seems to be exclusively associated with the presence of miniature vessels, pointed juglets, lentoid flasks and round-bottomed plates (Fig. 14).⁶⁸ At Arslantepe, the central Anatolian component of the Period IV pottery horizon is, on the contrary, quite remarkable and noticeable especially in open shapes. Two important aspects can be observed: first, the importance of the local repertoire in this period is still widely visible, specifically through necked cooking pots and jars that are, in general, almost totally unknown in the Hittite inventory; and second, central Anatolian types were already abundant at the site during the 16th century BC, with the percentages increasing over time from Period VB to IV (Fig. 15).⁶⁹

The comparison between Alalakh and Arslantepe is useful to illustrate how the intensity of the spread and the overlapping of central Anatolian pottery shapes in the peripheries is a highly complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can hardly be associated with the adoption of a restricted range of supposed diagnostic shapes or with a unique “model” of management.

During the post-Hittite period, different levels of continuity in the conservation of the Late Bronze Age pottery production can be observed. The Alalakh Period 0 pottery horizon is characterised by a bulk of Early Iron Age ceramics with both a strong continuity from the advanced Late Bronze Age local tradition and imported or locally made Mycenaean wares.⁷⁰ At Arslantepe, the comparison between the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Age assemblages has revealed that some typical central Anatolian standardised and mass-produced pottery types were continuously produced until the end of the second millennium BC. Moreover, this continuity is combined with a decrease in the number of pottery shapes and a deterioration in the technical level compared with the Late Bronze Age assemblage, testifying to significant quantitative and qualitative changes in the processes of production.⁷¹

CONCLUDING REMARKS: A DIACHRONIC OVERVIEW

The examination of the archaeological records taken into account deserves a final diachronic discussion, in order to sum up the compared features in a synthesised perspective (Fig. 16). Imperial expansion and control have been underlined through the analysis of cultural influences and the materialisation of Hittite political power evident at the sites of Alalakh and Arslantepe.

Despite several similarities, the mechanisms of management at the two sites are deeply divergent. Indeed, Alalakh seems to be more involved in forms of emulation of royal prestige and the manifestation of the power of kingship than in an actual adoption of the means

⁶⁸ Yener 2013, pp. 17–18; Horowitz 2015, pp. 170–172.

⁶⁹ Manuelli 2013, pp. 409–410.

⁷⁰ Yener 2013, p. 20. See also the contributions presented in this volume by Marina Pucci and Mariacarmela Montesanto.

⁷¹ See Manuelli 2016, pp. 30–32 for a wider discussion on the topic.

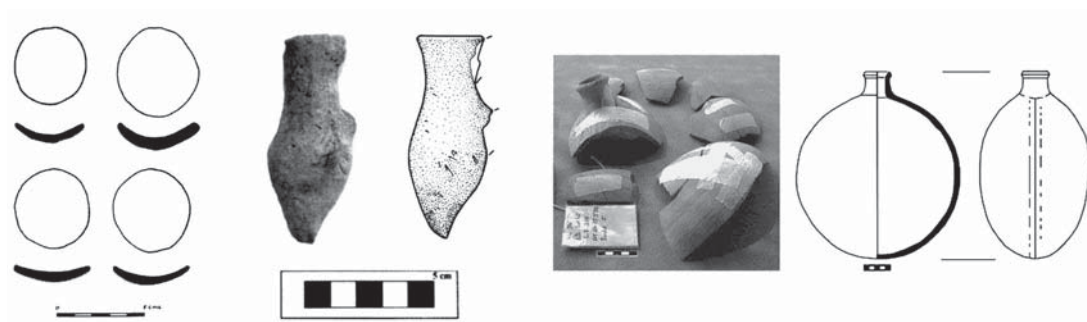


Fig. 14. Alalakh, selection of the pottery assemblage from Period 2. Adapted from Yener 2013, p. 32, fig. 6: 4–7.

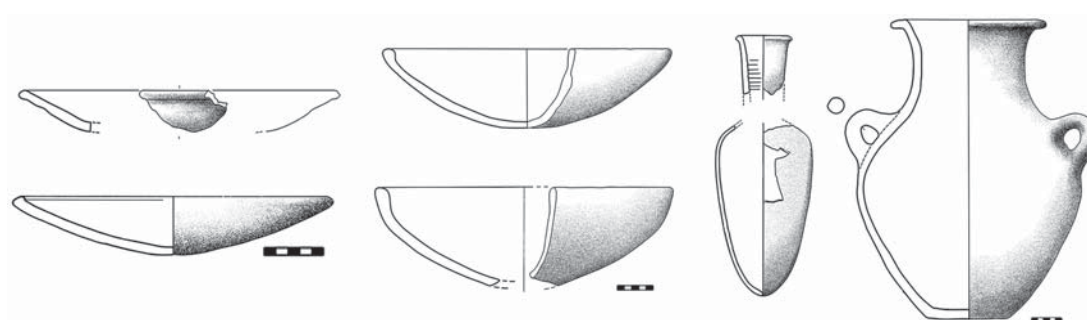


Fig. 15. Arslantepe, selection of pottery assemblage from Period IV.

		14 th century BCE	13 th century BCE	12 th century BCE
MONUMENTAL ARCHITECTURE	Alalakh	Anatolian / Egyptian type fortresses	Remodelled temple	Domestic architecture
	Arslantepe	Anatolian type gateway	Hittite military outpost	Post-Hittite citadel
SETTLEMENT PATTERN	Alalakh	The whole mound is fortified	Only the temple area is used	Scattered remains
	Arslantepe	Gradual abandonment of the southern area	Only the northern area is settled	Only the northern area is settled
MONUMENTAL RELIEF	Alalakh	Prince Tuthaliya relief	Hurrian style lions	
	Arslantepe			PUGNUS-mili reliefs
METALWORK	Alalakh	Hittite prestige weapons		
	Arslantepe	Hittite prestige weapons		
GLYPHIC MATERIAL	Alalakh	Hittite administrative practices	Traces of Hittite administrative practices	Post-Hittite biconvex seals
	Arslantepe	Hittite administrative practices	Increasing Hittite administrative practices	Post-Hittite biconvex seals
CERAMIC PRODUCTION	Alalakh	Low presence of "Hittite" types	Low presence of "Hittite" types	EIA ceramics and Aegean influence
	Arslantepe	High presence of "Hittite" types	High presence of "Hittite" types	Continuity of "Hittite" types

Fig. 16. Diachronic table taking into consideration the topics discussed in the text.

of production and administration that are, on the contrary, evident at Arslantepe. This difference is probably due to the fact that Arslantepe was subjected to actual Hittite “political control,” required by the nature of the settlement and its strategic location for monitoring Hurrian and Assyrian movements, while the Hittite relationship with Alalakh reflects the city’s “political power,” given its religious importance as a result of its cultural proximity to Karkemiš and Aleppo.

New data from Alalakh shows that during at least the late 14th century BC, the site was governed by high officials resident in the city, with wide-ranging responsibility over the surrounding territory. Their lineage possibly derived from the Aleppo dynasty and, as a result, they may have been directly related to the royal family at Hattuşa.⁷² The governor that ruled Alalakh was thus directly linked to Hittite royalty and used his lineage for a full expression of his power, which was exerted over a population still entrenched in its own means of production. On the contrary, texts from Boğazköy suggest that authority at Arslantepe was in the hands of indigenous groups, administratively supported by Hittite officials.⁷³ Indeed, the high number of standardised and mass-produced central Anatolian pottery shapes and the presence of Hittite-style biconvex seals attest to the presence of a limited number of individuals, probably public officials and artisans, that moved, even if temporarily, from the homeland to the Malatya plain.

If the 13th century BC represents at Arslantepe the development of the above-mentioned system, at Alalakh it brings a drastic reshaping. At Arslantepe, we are aware that the increasing centralisation of the governmental nucleus, with the abandonment of part of the mound and the creation of a military outpost, and the surge in the use of Hittite-style biconvex seals and pottery types are a result of Hittite anxiety regarding the Assyrian threat along the eastern border of the empire. The reasons behind the abandonment of a greater part of the settlement at Alalakh are instead more enigmatic. The whole of that archaeological record attests to a sort of retreat of Hittite government from the site. The presence of seals, among which are the well-known examples belonging to the “Country Lord[s]” Paluwa and Pilukatuha, along with the sporadic occurrence of Hittite-style pottery shapes, are signs that, despite the possible relocation of Hittite governance somewhere not far from the city, some form of continuity existed, probably in association with the settlement’s religious prestige.⁷⁴

These events evolve during the 12th century BC. Domestic remains associated with local and foreign Early Iron Age wares indicate continuity and change at Alalakh, but also a definitive rupture with the magnificence of the past. Completely different is the fate of Arslantepe. Here the ruling class, either the successors of the small group of Hittite administrators of the city in the previous centuries or the members of the Hittite elites that migrated from central Anatolia after the collapse of the empire, used the ideological vehicles preserved from the former polity, as well as their links to the Karkemiš kingship’s genealogy, to find legitimation of their own authority.

⁷² Yener *et al.* 2014.

⁷³ Manuelli 2013, pp. 413–418.

⁷⁴ Yener 2013, pp. 18–19.

In conclusion, in the framework of the Hittite Empire's expansion and dissolution, the current picture seems to be anything but consistent. The main impact of Hittite material culture at Alalakh and Arslantepe is manifested in different phases of the history of the sites, in different ways and with different intensities. The 16th–15th centuries BC show that the Hittite component is already clearly visible at Arslantepe, especially through the presence of pottery types and architectural layouts, although these are merged with a variety of influences, while at Alalakh it is less perceptible. During the second half of the 14th century BC, Alalakh is instead an important governmental centre, wherein the Hittite domain seems to be especially related to its religious role. Nonetheless, in the 13th century BC, Alalakh sees its role within the mechanisms of the imperial management interrupted, or at least abruptly reduced, while Arslantepe acquires the position of an important military epicentre, with evidence of Hittite control over the means of production and administration, displaying a continuous development of the site after the collapse of the centralised power.

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