

## **The Anatolian Political Status between the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age**

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### **Introduction:**

The entire systems of the Near East were deeply affected by series of the crises and changes which reshaped the political organization and formed the watershed moment between the Bronze and Iron Age. Shortly after 1200 B.C., most of these political systems had abruptly collapsed due to the arrival of foreign invaders from the west. The clash of invaders had drastic effects in the light of the decline which afflicted with the major powers and a number of the Bronze Age centers also came to an end.\* Obviously, wars, deportations, and production, definitely in Anatolia, became an endemic problem by the end of the Late Bronze Age.

The Iron Age was a significant political era, in which the Near East civilizations tried to be restructured, adapting to the new conditions after the disintegration of earlier system of the regional empires by invasions of the so-called Sea Peoples and the fall of the Hittite Empire, though the activities of marauding populations looking for new lands to settle may have been one of many factors responsible for the apparently chaotic events of the age. Some of the pre-classical empires have emerged in the place of earlier ones, definitely the Assyrian Empire, in which existence fundamentally shaped the entire area and its greatest control extended from Egypt to Persia and from the Taurus Mountains to the Persian Gulf (Malata, 2015).

Although Mesopotamia remained relatively untouched by the invaders, the west (from Anatolia to Cyprus, and the Levant) was affected by these migrations, and

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\* Similarly, the Iron Age witnessed a number of new developments around the world, in which Greece emerged from its dark ages and gave birth to Athens and Sparta. The Iliad and Odyssey were composed, the Doric architectural style was developed and Zoroaster began to preach his message in Persia. Also, Egypt lost its ancient glory to be dominated by Libyans, Nubians, and Assyrians. In India, the Upanishads were written, Hinduism emerged, and the caste system was formulated. Feudalism developed in China, while the Olmec civilization flourished in Mexico (Bournoutian, 2006).

experienced a radical change through both technological and social innovations, opening up to new ethnical, political and linguistic influences (Liverani 2014: 383). In this context, Assyria seems to have been largely unaffected by upheavals affecting other parts of the western Asian world. Decades after the kingdom of Ḫatti had disappeared, when Egypt had lost its major power, and Babylon was ruled by a succession of insignificant dynasties, Assyria remained a formidable power in western Asia. In the reign of King Tiglath-pileser I (ca. 1114-1076 B.C.), it still retained control over the substantial part of northern Mesopotamia. Indeed, he extended the earlier boundaries of Assyrian enterprise by leading an expedition across the Euphrates to the Mediterranean coast. However, after his death, Assyria entered upon almost two centuries of decline, perhaps due in some measure to an increasing the Aramaean presence in many regions where it had exercised control (Bryce, 2009). Generally, the early beginning of Iron Age is often dated to the last quarter of the second millennium B.C., and this period witnessed the emergence of new cultures on debris of the Bronze Age kingdoms. These changes were mostly marked in Anatolia, where regional cultures emerged out the Hittite Empire. Thus, we can summarize both of the change reasons and the major features of this period in the following items

### **The Natural Crises and the Difficulties of Production:**

The last days of the Hittite Empire are outlined in numerous literary texts that tend to focus on events in which human beings played a major role. In spite of the lack of the reliable climatic data for central Anatolia, the available evidence could suggest that the Hittite Empire flourished during a climatically favorable period; and this breakdown was probably precipitated by a combination of negative forces in the environment, perhaps elicited by higher solar activity that resulted in the warmer and drier climate. The beginning of this drier period seems to have been coincided with a chain of events that greatly influenced, not only on the Anatolian plateau but throughout the Near East. Modern environmental studies indicated that a small downward variation in the precipitation amount could adversely affect the agricultural production on the plateau; also the overall impact of this period could have become manifest by both of drought and crop failure as well as famine and malnutrition (Gorny, 1989).

### **The Demographic Upset and its Social Implications:**

The Near East was afflicted by an external wave of migrations; and the internal demographic changes must have been worsened by the political developments and several social problems to become a fundamental reason for the entire collapse. Among the critical social changes were the collapse of the Hittite Empire and the movements of Sea Peoples which produced major population shifts and general upheaval promoting social-political reorganization on many fronts. Thus, Anatolia experienced the abandonment of large cities, and its settlements began to be concentrated in the fertile valleys. Regarding for the origin place of the migratory movements, it was probably from the Balkan Peninsula. These movements had to cross the eastern Mediterranean, an aspect that gave them a characteristic maritime connotation; whereas this region often shaped an integral part of political and commercial network that included the Near Eastern and Egyptian coasts (Liverani, 2014; Pigott, 1982).

During the Late Bronze Age, the Hittites were the main rulers of Anatolia and the border of their empire reached to Egypt in the south; in conjunction with the Minoan Kingdom of Crete that was later invaded and looted by hostile warriors of the Mycenaean Kingdom (Erbengi, 1993). The Hittites dealt with Ahhiyawa (*i.e.* Achaia), located on the other side of the sea (Greece/ Peloponnese); the elements of Mycenae reached the Anatolian coast to represent a bridge between the non-urbanized areas of Europe and the Central Mediterranean. Thus, the Mycenaean Kingdom, divided into a series of autonomous city states, was the most important participants in this network and its relations with both of Egypt and Levant were predominantly commercial. This type of trade often led to a visible increase in the exportation of Mycenaean pottery to Anatolia and Syro-Levantine coasts, reaching as far as Egypt (Liverani, 2014).

By the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the perimeter of Hittite Empire was being probed by a variety of sociopolitical forces. The Hittites were never able to escape the restraints of their environment and inhabitants' response to the environmental framework of the central plateau. Similar circumstances on the periphery of the empire might have set off mass movements of peoples in search of less affected regions (Sandars, 1978).

## The Technological Innovations:

The transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age is marked by some technological innovations of the iron metallurgy, which have strong implications on the territorial, socio-economic and political structure of the Near East. Some scholars still support a hypothesis of the spread of iron (definitely steel) from the west and an assumption that it was brought by the Sea Peoples after the crisis of trade and palace workshops (Liverani, 2014). Overall, the Iron was expedient when bronze and copper were in short supply, perfection of methods for forging iron provided far more iron weapons and tools.<sup>\*</sup> In this context, its technology became favorable to the regions rich in native deposits of ore, and heavily armed infantry and cavalry dominated the battlefield. Consequently, the spread of iron technology and the economic recovery allowed more powerful states to coalesce in the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C., and these innovations allowed many tools and weapons to be produced (Harl, 2001).

The early iron technology became widespread for the first time in Anatolia by the first millennium B.C. to be gradually used for producing weapons and tools. From the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., iron began to be employed in daily usage and took over the production of weapons and tools from the bronze. The finds include weapons (daggers, spears, arrow-heads), agricultural implements (ploughs hoes, sickles), and tools as tongs, scissors and shaving knives (Yalçın, 1999). The archaeological evidence for the production of important quantities of iron is sparse prior to 1200 B.C., and forging iron started to be considerably more demanding than the mass production of copper/ bronze artifacts by the casting. Regarding the explanation of why there was a time lag between this technical innovation and its adoption on larger scale, Pigott (1982) interprets the reason of this delay to the energy required to iron-making. Thus, it is suggested that the significance of Iron (steel) as a very valuable commodity can be affirmed by numerous developments, accompanied to its industry.<sup>\*\*</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> The textual sources in Anatolia and Mesopotamia assigned iron by different terms, as follows, "*Sumerian*: KU.AN, AN.BAR; *Akkadian*: parzillu, amutum, habalkinu; *Hittite*: hapalki; *Greek*: sideros" (Maxwell-Hyslop 1972).

<sup>\*\*</sup> For more details of the technical variable of iron metallurgy and its impact in the Iron Age, see (Yalçın, 1999; النجار ٢٠١٤ ب).

### **The Rise of the Trade Connection:**

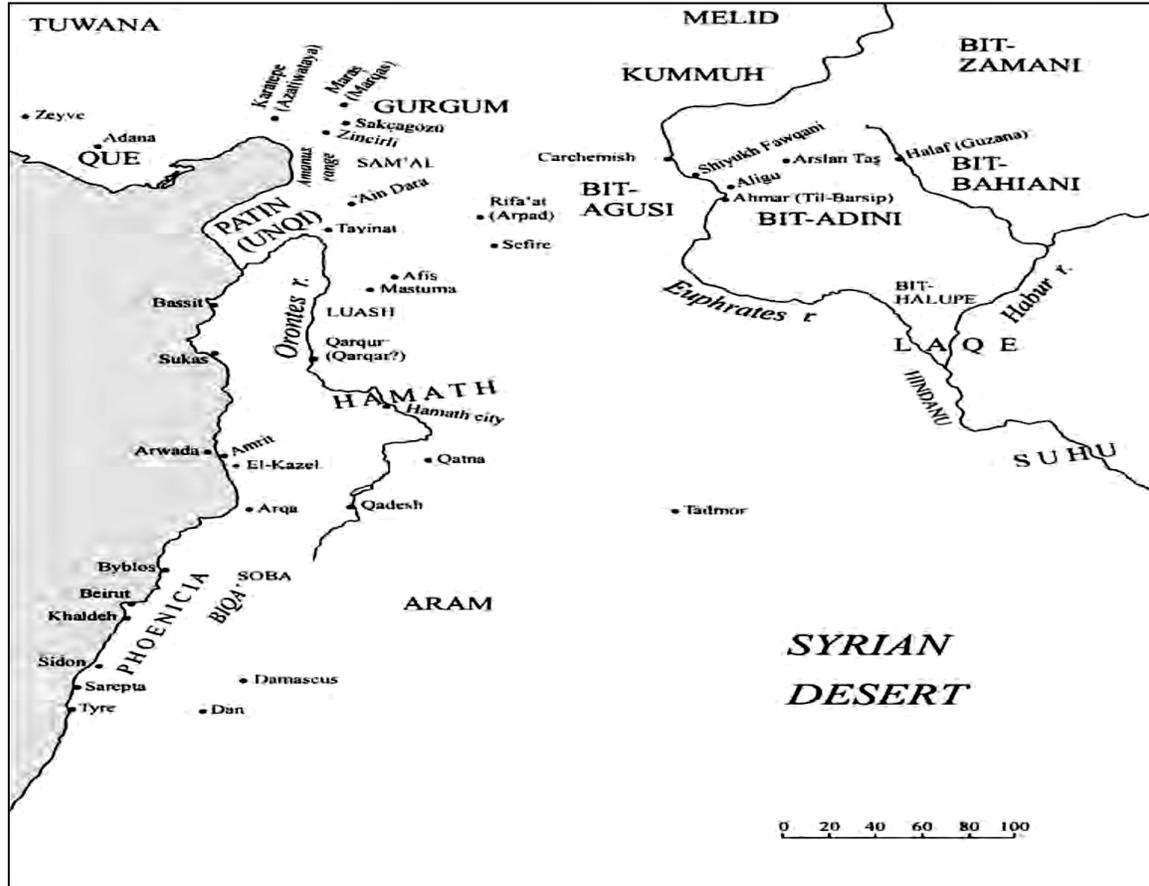
In spite of the cultural decline, many cities have taken an advantage of trading revival as a result of the Phoenician activities on the Syro-Palestinian coast and the Aramaean parallel on land. Phoenicia consisted of large number of principalities or city-states, the most prominent of which were Byblos, Sidon, and Tyre. On the Orontes in northern Syria, the city of Hamah had become the capital of a large kingdom of the same name. During the first part of Iron Age phase, it was ruled by a Neo-Hittite dynasty, which was replaced in early 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. by a line of the Aramaean rulers (Bryce, 2009).

The Aramaeans, as allies or mercenaries, settled throughout the northern Syria and along the middle and lower Euphrates valley in the wake of the collapse of the Bronze Age; and seized power in several cities of Neo-Hittite kingdoms, ruling in the traditions of Hittite lords. Also, they adapted arts and institutions of the Neo-Hittites. In southern Syria, Damascus (Aram-Damascus) became the capital of one of the most important kingdoms in the Levant, and their ruler had spread through many parts of western Asia, especially Syria, Mesopotamia, and eastern Anatolia. Some of them began to be united under temporary alliance (Map 1), such as Bit-Zamani, Bit-Bahiani, Bit-Adini, Bit-Aguši, Aram-Damascus, and Sam'al (Zincirli) (Harl, 2001). \*

In parallel with the rapid spread of political benefits achieved by the Aramaean tribes which took advantages of their location on or near the Euphrates River to control of the trade routes, besides the breakup of the Aramaean Kingdoms and the population dispersal increased the spread of settlers throughout western Asia, their West Semitic language (Aramaic) gained ascendancy as the *lingua franca* of the Fertile Crescent, replacing Akkadian as the international language of diplomacy to become the language of communication. It was written in Phoenician alphabet, on the Hittite traditions for the monumental stone architecture and sculpture (Bryce, 2009; Gunter, 1997). Thus, the Phoenicians (perhaps Canaanites) introduced the alphabet to the peoples of Anatolia and Greece emerging out of an illiterate Dark Age (Harl, 2001).

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\* Concerning the features of the Syrian political alliance which were formed against the Assyrian assault, see: (النجار، ٢٠١٤).



Map (1): Iron Age Kingdoms in northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia (ca. 900-700 B.C.). After (Bryce, 2009).

### The Modest Return of the Hittite (Neo-Hittite kingdoms):

The later period after the collapse of Hittite power are poorly represented both archaeologically and textually; in which the ethnic makeup of Anatolia and Syria had changed and the political vacuum allowed for considerable mobility on the part of peripheral groups. In Anatolia, the Phrygians (Muški) had settled in the highlands from the west, while the Kasku (Kaska) tribes had entered the interior of Anatolia until the Assyrians later encountered them as far east as upper Euphrates.



Map (2): The political situation of Anatolia and Syria in the Iron Age, after (van Dongen, 2010)

The relatively isolated regions of Cilicia and Lycia may have retained a portion of their native populations while experiencing an influx of immigrants from inland areas, although there is no archaeological supports for this (Map 2). The south-coastal areas of Anatolia enjoyed continuous settlement into the early Iron Age. With the merging of disparate and dynamic populations and absence of a strong central authority, the former Hittite provinces rapidly fragmented (Collins, 2007).



## **The Anatolian Political Status between the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age**

A number of urban centers of Late Bronze Age survived into the succeeding Iron Age, and indeed sometimes enjoyed greater prosperity than they had in earlier existence. Thus, the Hittites are beginning to return their early political entity and a number of small centers, so-called the Neo-Hittite kingdoms, have emerged in the southeastern Anatolia and northern Syria. During the obscure period between 1200-1000 B.C., these kingdoms were still under the formation and in the process of overcoming the effects of the collapse of empire; to be consolidated into a series of competing centers that often erupted into military conflict to have not unified politically, but a kind of cooperation was achieved between them to be united only in the face of a common foe, apparently the Assyrian aggression (Liverani, 2014). For the most part, these kingdoms were located within Hatti's former subject-territories, particularly in Taurus region and northern Syria, where the name of Hatti continued to be used throughout the Iron Age, as attested in all of the Neo-Assyrian, Urartian, and Hebrew texts (Bryce, 2009).

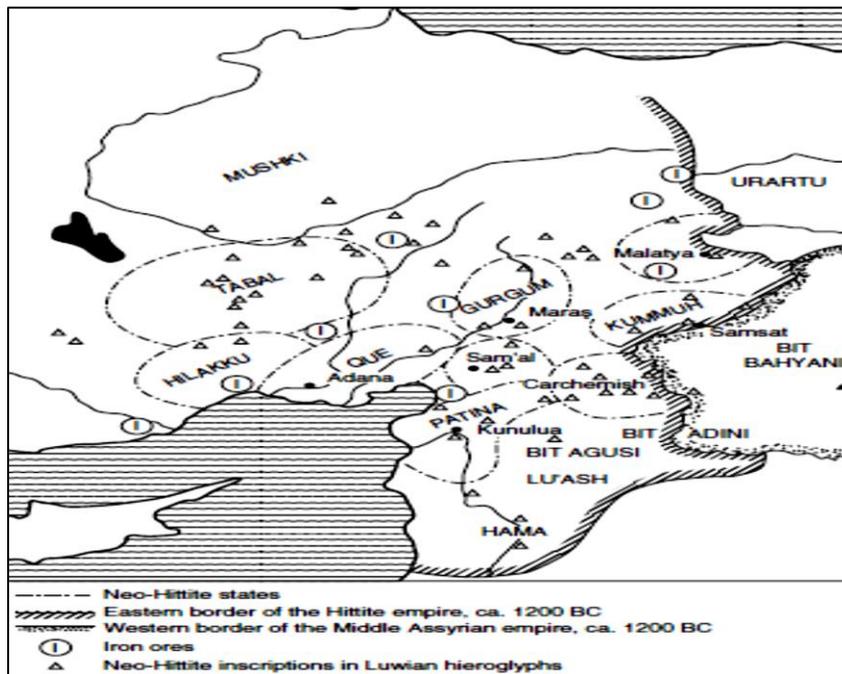
Regarding to the territory of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms, it is bordered with the Aramaeans to the south, the Phrygians to the north-west, and Euphrates to the east, while the other side of the Euphrates is occupied by the Assyrian and the Urartian territories (Liverani, 2014). In Anatolia, these included small kingdoms known to the Assyrians collectively as Tabal, in the area between the upper Halys and the Ceyhan Rivers and including parts of the former kingdom of Tarhuntassa, Hilakku (Cilicia), and Que (the Cilician Plain) (Collins, 2007).

Any rate, the Neo-Hittite regions were subdivided into ten capitals. In northern Syria, Carchemish was the most obvious heir of the Hittite empire and seems initially to have been ruled by direct descendants of former Hittite royal dynasty (Bryce, 2009), and north of the Orontes lay both of Sam'al and Patina Kingdom, which the Assyrians called Unqi (Mukish, modern Amuq) and to their east toward the Euphrates River was Bit-Aguši (Table 1). Between these Hittite strongholds, the Aramean presence was seeping through newer centers from Arpad/Aleppo to Sam'al; in which southward on the Orontes were Lu<sup>a</sup>as and Hamah and east of the Euphrates opposite the kingdom of Carchemish was Bit-Adini, with its capital at Til Barsip (Map 3). Further north, west of the Euphrates, there were Kummuhu (whose capital was in modern Samsat) and Melid (modern Arslan tepe). West of these two kingdoms there was Gurgum and its capital Marqasi (modern Maras), while Cilicia was subdivided into two kingdoms. To the east, in the plains, there was Que; while to the more mountainous west was Hilakku (Liverani 2014: 450).

	Arpad	Patna	Carchemish	Sam'al	Gurgum	Que	Kummuh	Malaya	Tabal
1100			Ini-Tohub I ca. 1100 Talmi-Tohub II ca. 1000					Alkumai ca. 1100	
1000			Suhi I		Palakm ca. 950				
950			Atawalananza Suhi II Kahwa	Gabbar ca. 920		Muwanza Halpanuniya I			
900	Gui ca. 870	Lubama I ca. 870 Sapalulme	Sangra 870-848 7-858	Banah ca. 890 Hayanu ca. 860-850	ca. 900	Muwabli 858 Halpanuniya II 853	Qazulu 860-857	Lali 853-836	
850	Arame 858-834 Ata-shunki 805-796	Qalparinda Lubama II Suri Sai	858-7 7-831 831 831-7 Atinuwa	Kilamuwa ca. 840-830	Palakm II Halpanuniya III	Kate 858-833 Kimi 833	Kumzahpi 853 Ushipilulme 805-773		Tuwai I 832 Kiki
800	Mitti-El 754-740		Yairi Kamni	Panamuwa I ca. 790 Baz-Sur			Shahu Hharu-ata ca. 780-750		Tuwai II ca. 800
750	740 Arpad Assyrian province	Tutanmu 738 738; Patna Assyrian province	Yisii 738-717 717; Carchemish Assyrian province	Panamuwa II ca. 750-730 Baz-Rakib ca. 730-710 ca. 710; Sam'al Assyrian province	Tahulara 741-711 Mutallu 711 711; Gurgum Assyrian province	Urikki 738-710 ca. 710 Que Assyrian province	Kuzuhapi 755-732 Mutallu 712-708 708; Assyrian province	Sulumdi 743-732 Gaminanu 730-720 Tahunaci 720-712 712; Malaya Assyrian province	Wasime 739-730 Hulli 730-7 Kummuch/ Ambari 7-713 Ikkalu
700						696: revolt of Kima 689: revolt of Sanduri		675: revolt of Mugalu	675: Mugalu of Malaya

Table (1): Chronology of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms. After (Liverani, 2014)

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**Map (3):** The Political borders of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms (ca. 1100–700 B.C.). After (Liverani, 2014).

In the light of these kingdoms were concentrated in the valleys and the plains between mountains, and were separated from each other by Taurus Mountains, they were for the most part strategically located in key positions along major trade routes for communication, access to those natural resources necessary for the iron manufacture, and allowing control over cultivated areas accounting for their reputation as centers of affluence (Collins 2007: 81).

Culturally, these Neo-Hittite kingdoms are remarkable by diverse character, whereas some of centers had their origins in Bronze Age cities; others appear to have been new foundations. All of them, however, preserved in modified form many Hittite traditions, albeit intermixed with the Assyrian elements and model for similar complexes of contemporary Aramaean and Phoenician rulers, for a period of half a millennium after the Hatti disappearance (Bryce, 2009). Also, their artists pioneered the use of relief sculpture in tandem with narrative texts, a technique transmitted to Assyrian imperial artists (Harl, 2001).

In this context, the general movement to south-east has led to assume that the origins of Neo-Hittite Kingdoms were linked to a migration from Anatolia to northern Syria. This movement should have taken place when the empire collapsed, as just reaction to the migration of Phrygians in the Central plateau. Also, the impression of migrations is largely due to the loss of the western and northern territories (Liverani, 2014). Clearly, the Neo-Hittite kingdoms experienced the threat of being neighbors to the north Mesopotamians, who in the past had penetrated into Anatolia through economic and military undertakings (Mellink, 2006).

In conclusion, two major kingdoms appeared in Anatolia when the Hittites subsequently had disappeared from history: Urartu in the east and Phrygia in central Anatolia, beside several city-states in the western Anatolia which is designated as the "Neo-Hittite kingdoms".

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▪ أوضاع ممالك الأناضول السياسية فيما بين العصر البرونزي المتأخر وبدايات العصر الحديدي

▪ محسن نجم الدين ١

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▪ ملخص البحث

▪ يستعرض هذا البحث أهم الملامح السياسية التي شهدتها بلاد الأناضول في الفترة الانتقالية ما بين مرحلة العصر البرونزي المتأخر وبداية العصر الحديدي، من خلال تحديد أسبابها على صعيد المتغيرات المناخية والديموغرافية بجانب تحديد ملامح العصر الحديدي وابتكاراتها الحضارية، وبالختام تناول طبيعة عودة الامبراطورية الحثية فيما يعرف باسم "الممالك الحثية الحديثة".