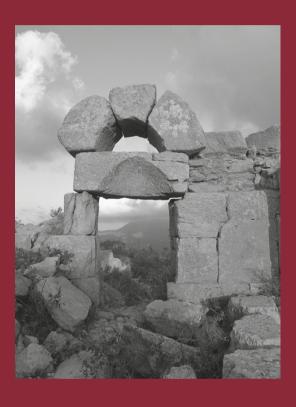Melammu
Workshops and
Monographs
8

Shaping
Boundaries

Ethnicity
and Geography
in the Eastern
Mediterranean Area
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Zaphon

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Illustration on the cover: *An idea of border*. Monastery of Saint Simeon Stylites the
Younger (Samandağ – Turkey) (photo S. Ponchia).

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Identities in the Making

Cultural Frontiers in Central Anatolia in the 2nd Millennium BCE

Alvise Matessi

Abstract

The Hittite Laws draw a separation of the Hittite domain into seemingly discrete socio-geographical entities: Hatti, Luwiya, and Pala. This distinction has inspired a long-lasting debate among Hittitologists, chiefly oriented to the definition of different ethno-linguistic spheres in Anatolia. The present paper moves on from this debate and takes the Hatti-Luwiya-Pala opposition to signify a permeable divide between Hatti and other spheres of the early Hittite administration, based on a core-periphery organisation. I propose that this divide did not emerge as an abstract feature of the Hittite administrative map, but was determined by a cultural frontier having its traceable roots in the Old Assyrian period of the early 2nd millennium BCE, when the term Hatti (attested in the form Hattum) already indicated a geographic entity clearly distinct from the rest of Anatolia. In conclusion, I propose that both Hatti and Luwiya originally derived from ethnolinguistic designations for the "Hattian" and the "Luwian" lands respectively, but these meanings were already altered by the time the Hittite kingdom emerged.[1]

1. Introduction

A recurrent tendency in attempts to reconstruct the cultural map of Central Anatolia during the period of Hittite domination (ca. 1650–1200 BCE) has been to look for a precise correlation between attested territorial entities and language areas, in turn identified with the homeland of different ethnic milieus. Within this perspective, the formation of the Hittite kingdom has been often described as the political domination of one Indo-European group, identified with Hittite speakers, over native non-Indo-European populations speaking Hattian.[2] The Hittites would have moved from the land of Neša/Kaneš (near modern Kayseri), after which they named their own vernacular, *nešili* or *nešumnili*, while Hattians, speaking *hattili*, were at home in the "land of Hatti," lying within the Kızılırmak River bend.

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[2] Among the latest works employing this model, see Singer, 2007; McMahon, 2010.

Map of Central Anatolia, with the maximum extent of the Old Hittite Kingdom (dashed line) and the main geographical entities treated in this paper.

Further clues for a match between geo-linguistic and socio-political boundaries within the Hittite domain are considered to derive from some passages of a collection of legal cases called the "Hittite Laws" (CTH 291), which apparently outline a distinction between the lands of Hatti, Luwiya, and Pala: Luwiya would be the homeland of Luwians, speaking *luwili*, and Pala the homeland of Palaeans, speaking *palaumnili*. In most current interpretations, this broad subdivision in linguistic areas also defines an ethno-cultural map of Hittite Central Anatolia, that in turn overlapped with social, political, and/or administrative boundaries.

While not denying the basic geo-linguistic scenario, in this paper I will challenge its direct association with the Hittite political geography. As I will show, the divide between Hatti, Luwiya, and Pala does not bear witness to ethno-linguistic boundaries informing Hittite society nor to a political repartition of the Hittite kingdom. Rather, it is the political/administrative readaptation of a per-

meable cultural frontier between Hatti and the rest of Central Anatolia, shedding traceable roots in the early 2nd millennium BCE.

2. Core-periphery interactions in the Old Hittite period (ca. 1650–1400 BCE)

The Hittite state, centred at Hattuša in the Kızılırmak basin, came to incorporate large parts of Central Anatolia at a very early stage of its history.[3] The first well-documented Hittite king, Hattušili I, could claim conquests in Upper Mesopotamia and Syria after consolidating his power in territories closer to home. The Old Hittite "Palace chronicles" (CTH 8), one of the earliest products of Hittite literature, narrate several anecdotes involving Hittite officers based in cities situated all around the Kızılırmak basin.[4] Notwithstanding this early expansion, extensive portions of Central Anatolia were still considered somehow foreign to Hittite political identities until quite an advanced stage of Hittite history.

The historical prologue of a famous edict issued by King Telipinu (CTH 19), ruling in the late 16th century BCE, starts by narrating the deeds of the founder of the Hittite dynasty, Labarna, who lived almost two centuries before, in the early 17th century BCE. Although dealing with past events, this passage can be read as a very instructive source about the worldviews that Telipinu still retained in the 16th century BCE, a phase when Hittite sovereignty in Central Anatolia was well consolidated in many respects.[5] The text reads as follows (my emphasis in italics):

> *The land was small* but wherever he (*i.e.* Labarna) went on campaign, he held the enemy country subdued by (his) might. He kept devastating countries, he disempowered countries, *he made them the boundaries of the Sea*. When he came back from campaign, however, each (of) his sons went somewhere to a (conquered) country: *the cities of Hupišna, Tuwanuwa, Nenašša, Landa, Zallara, Purušhanda and Lušna*. These countries they each governed and the great cities made progress.[6] (Edict of Telipinu – CTH 19, I 5–12)

The image of the Sea as a symbolic ultimate frontier, an idea certainly borrowed from Mesopotamian cosmological perceptions, serves to embed Labarna's actions in a sort of imperial, almost universalistic dimension, further emphasised by the

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[3] On Hittite history in general, see Bryce, 2005 and Klengel, 1999.

[4] See the textual edition by Dardano, 1997. For a historical interpretation of the early Hittite expansion based on a cultic list, see Forlanini, 2007.

[5] The 16th century BCE is now well understood as a period of major development and expansion of Hittite economic infrastructures in Anatolia: see Schachner, 2009. For the reading of the prologue of the Edict of Telipinu as a historical source for Telipinu's own times, see Liverani, 1977.

[6] Reference edition: Hoffmann, 1984. English translation mostly based on van den Hout, 2003.

contrast with the "small" extent of the land before the expansion. The text provides a list of countries subdued by Labarna and, eventually, handed to his sons. Tuwanuwa, likely continued as Tuwana in Iron Age inscriptions and Tyana in Hellenistic and Roman times, is agreed to correspond to the site of Kemerhisar, in the modern Niğde province. Hupišna, forming with Tuwanuwa a recurrent cluster in Hittite texts, is generally localised in the environs of modern Ereğli. Nenašša is known from other texts to have lain close to the southern or southwestern shores of the Kızılırmak River.[7] Purušhanda worked as an important *kārum* ("trade colony") in the Old Assyrian commercial network in Anatolia, and is mentioned in later Hittite texts as belonging to the Lower Land, a region located between the Tuz Gölü Lake and the Taurus mountains.[8] Zallara should be probably sought around the Taurus piedmont, not far from the Lower Land, as suggested by the Annals of Hattušili III (CTH 82).[9] Hittite texts offer fewer clear clues about the geography of Landa and Lušna, but scholars agree on their localisation south of the Tuz Gölü.[10]

There is a general agreement, therefore, that all the cities mentioned in the Edict of Telipinu as conquered by Labarna lay in the plateau south and southwest of the Kızılırmak basin. It is also important to note that Labarna's conquests are among the few deeds whose geographical scope is explicitly detailed in the long historical prologue of Telipinu's edict. Significantly, the only other similar cases are Telipinu's own campaigns (CTH 19, II 16–22) and Muršili I's raids on Aleppo and Babylon (I 28–31). Moreover, the positive model of Labarna's expansion in the southern plateau is contrasted with the belt of external enemies unsuccessfully faced by Telipinu's predecessor, Ammuna (II 1–4). These circumstances suggest that, as of the late 16th century BCE, Telipinu still imagined the southern plateau as a foreign territory or as a land transcending the natural limits of Hittite sovereignty. Successful campaigns against this region were an event worth commemorating on a par with raids aiming for more distant places such as Aleppo and Babylon. We may therefore imagine that some kind of frontier was perceived between Labarna's power base and the southern plateau.

The existence of such frontier in Telipinu's worldview is confirmed in some of the normative passages of his Edict that outline an administrative reorganisa-

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[7] Most recently, Kryzseń, 2016: 371–376, with reference to previous literature.

[8] The exact position of Purušhanda has been the object of some disagreement in the last decade, after Barjamovic, 2011: 357–378 contested its traditional identification with the site Acemhöyük in the Aksaray region, to propose a more westerly localisation, in the current area of Afyonkarahisar. Forlanini, initially more conservative (2008; 2012), has recently proposed an alternative hypothesis, tentatively identifying the ancient toponym with the newly discovered site of Türkmen Karahöyük, in the Konya plain (Forlanini, 2022).

[9] Gurney, 1997.

[10] Most recently, Forlanini, 2017: 243–244.

tion of the revenue system based on a network of storehouses (É ^{NA_4}KIŠIB, lit. "house of the seal") situated in various cities, sorted in two different lists (CTH 19, §§37–38: III 17–42). As argued by Singer (1984: 103–104), the main politico-geographic criterion informing these lists is a separation between Hatti and a fuzzy constellation of peripheral districts. The preserved portions of the lists in fact record only places located beyond the Kızılırmak river bend while well-known centres of the Hittite core region, such as Ankuwa, Katapa, or Hattena, are not included.

In the light of this separation between Hatti and the rest of Central Anatolia, we can perhaps better understand the passages that oppose Hatti to the lands of Luwiya and Pala in the Old Hittite version of the Hittite Laws (CTH 291, §§5, 19–21 and 23).[11] According to most scholars this opposition bears testimony to a sort of tripartition of Anatolia in the Hittite "mental map", in turn depending on ethnolinguistic boundaries. Yakubovich, on the other hand, interpreted the opposition as the witness of a social boundary, based on the ethno-linguistic affiliation of the subjects.[12] Challenging both views, I have proposed another solution. In the purview of a purely ethno-linguistic distinction, be it geopolitical or social, the definition of Hatti would remain problematic. We know, in fact, that during the Hittite Old Kingdom this region was inhabited by both Hittites and Hattians:[13] which of the two components did the term Hatti refer to in the Laws? Yakubovich, initially opting for the Hittites (2010: 241), lately subscribed a more cautious view, considering Hatti in the Laws to be a reflection of the symbiosis between Hittite and Hattian milieus (2022: 8). In the latter understanding, which seems more appropriate, Hatti had more of a geographic rather than an ethnic meaning. If so, there is virtually no obstacle to extend this interpretation to the cases of Luwiya and Pala. However, considering that the Hittite Laws treat Luwiya and Pala as peers to one another, they can be understood together, as *partes pro toto* for the periphery of the Old Hittite domain, whereas the core was represented by Hatti.[14]

The most telling hint that the divide between Hatti and the rest of the Hittite kingdom as implied in the Laws was reflecting a spatial pattern of core-periphery interactions rather than a social or geographical boundary between different ethnic and/or linguistic components can be inferred from §§22–23. These provisions rank rewards for the restitution of fugitive slaves based on the distance of places of reapprehension from an unnamed vantage point, arguably corresponding to

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[11] Hoffner, 1997: 19, 30–32.

[12] "The 'men of Hatti' and 'men of Luwiya' were contrasted as ethnic groups whose social status differed rather than inhabitants of distinct geographic areas." Yakubovich, 2010: 240.

[13] Goedegebuure, 2008. For the blend between Hittite and Hattian cults, see Klinger, 1996: 16–24.

[14] Matessi, 2016: 138–139.

Hatti.[15] From this classification we understand that Luwiya was a vague land lying somewhere between the foreign territory and the "far side" (*edi*) of the river, presumably corresponding to the Kızılırmak (Hitt. *Marraššantiya*). The river can thus be interpreted as a threshold between the inner mainland, the "near side" (*ket*), that is the land of Hatti, and the peripheries of the Hittite domain, to which Luwiya belonged.[16]

It should be noted that this divide was not a neat boundary: Luwiya was not directly juxtaposed to the river and its near side, but located further away, beyond a liminal "far side". This situation stands in contrast, for example, with later Hittite treaties where rivers are intended as fixed boundary markers between two or more polities.[17] I would thus suggest that the divide between Luwiya and Hatti was not conceived as a clear-cut political/administrative demarcation, but mapped onto a fuzzier frontier, of arguable cultural character. More arguments to this point will appear clear after dealing with the genesis of the term Hatti as a geographical concept.

3. The genesis of Hatti as a geographical concept

Due to its etymological connection with the Hittite designation for the Luwian language, *luwili*, the toponym Luwiya, plays a crucial role in attempts to define the main Luwian speaking area and has therefore attracted considerable scholarly attention.[18] However, the interpretation of Luwiya cannot be disentangled from an understanding of the meaning(s) that the term Hatti assumed through time. In light of recent developments in scholarship, this issue deserves some consideration that, albeit not exhaustive, can provide relevant clues to the questions examined in the preceding section.

Scholars now generally agree that in Hittite texts the term Hatti was just the Akkadian designation of the toponym Hattuša.[19] Either Hatti or Hattuša could be used interchangeably, to refer both to the city and the land of Hattuša. However, although sharing the same meaning in Hittite usage, Hatti and Hattuša were two distinct words with diverging histories. On one hand, Hattuša is the Hittite thematisation in -*a* of the Hattian toponym *Ḫattuš*, consistently preserved in this form in Hattian texts stored in Hittite archives.[20] Significantly, Hattuš is also the only

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[15] See Hoffner 1997.

[16] Following the same logic, Pala would also belong to the outer sphere as it is treated as a peer of Luwiya in §5.

[17] Gerçek, 2017: 131.

[18] E.g. Yakubovich, 2010: 239–248; Mouton / Yakubovich 2021.

[19] The form *ḪATTI* would have been the genitive of an Akkadian word, whose nominative **ḪATTU* and accusative **ḪATTA* are virtually never attested. See the systematic synthesis by Weeden, 2011: 244–250, with reference to previous literature.

[20] For a recent evaluation of the attestations of Hatti and Hattuš(a) in the Hittite archives, see Kryszeń 2017.

form of the city name known in the records of the Kārum period (ca. 1950–1750 BCE), documenting the Old Assyrian commercial network in Anatolia, based in Kaneš/Neša (modern Kültepe, in the Kayseri province).[21] On the other hand, the Akkadian word Hatti would be a later development of the Old Assyrian place-name Hat(t)um, also involved in the Old Assyrian network. Therefore, the toponyms Hatti and Hattuša of the Hittite records had two distinct Old Assyrian predecessors in Hattum and Hattuš. The question, however, remains as to whether the two terms were synonymous in the Old Assyrian corpus as they were in Hittite texts. As it turns out, this question is crucial for understanding geographic and geo-linguistic developments in the Hittite core region.

To be sure, the Hattian-derived Old Assyrian toponym Hattuš also corresponds to Hattuša in geographic terms, because it indicated the city and *kārum* (Akkadian for "commercial colony") occupying the same site of the later capital of the Hittite kingdom and empire, modern Boğazköy. During the Kārum period, Hattuš was one among several neighbouring city-states competing with one another, including among others Šinahuttum (Hittite Šanahuitta), Tawiniya, and Amkuwa (Hittite Ankuwa). By contrast, the meaning of Hattum is more elusive.[22] Also in this case, as well as being etymologically related, Hattum and the "land of Hatti" seem to have indicated the same approximate region.[23] The Old Assyrian evidence suggests that Hattum was only a geographic region (*mātum*), because no settlement (*ālum*) or a *kārum* of Hattum is known so far. Hattum would thus represent a significant exception in the Old Assyrian corpus. In fact, Old Assyrian merchants operating in Anatolia usually named the lands involved in their network after a city hosting the local ruler and/or a commercial station.

Influenced by the later Hittite evidence, scholars have often been tempted to search for specific political relationships between Hattum and Hattuš. In fact, the two toponyms have been interpreted as either a synonymic pair,[24] akin to Hattuša and Hatti in the Hittite period, or a dichotomy whereby Hattum indicated the

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[21] The only known pre-Hittite attestation of the form in -*a* (Hattuša) occurs at Mari, in a text dated to the reign of Zimri-Lim, ca. 1780–1760 BCE. See Charpin, 2008: 105, with fn. 44.

[22] For a recent extensive treatment, upon which the following is based, see Barjamovic, 2011: 154–164.

[23] The Old Assyrian evidence would place Hattum to the north of Kaneš, and exclude Kaneš, Wahšušana, Wašhaniya, and Purušhattum (Hitt. Purušhanda) from its southern and western limits. To the east, Hattum was certainly distinct from Luhuzattiya, Hurama, Tegarama, and the other places ranging east of Kaneš. The eastern and northern limits of Hattum are more elusive and therefore subject to differing scholarly interpretations. Discussing the various geographical hypotheses, Barjamovic (2011: 159) maintains that Hattum overlapped to a large extent with later Hatti, but also included areas to the east of the Kızılırmak.

[24] Lewy, 1950.

country and Hattuš its capital city.[25]

I would advise against retrojecting a hegemonic role that Hattuš(a) did not attain before the Hittite period. In fact, the few available references suggest that Hattuš was not a particularly prominent political actor during the Old Assyrian period, at least in the early phase (Kārum II; ca. 1950–1836 BCE) which is also the only phase in which Hattum is attested.[26] For this reason, I subscribe to recent reassessments that advocate an interpretation of Hattuš and Hattum as two independent geographic terms. If any correlation existed between the two places, one would also expect a close overlap between respective commercial interactions attested in Old Assyrian records. However, the systematic analysis of textual occurrences carried out by Barjamovic (2011: 155–156; 292–293) shows that there was no such overlap. For example, Šinahuttum features as the most prominent partner of Hattuš, but it is never attested in relation to Hattum. Conversely, connections with such major centres as Wahšušana, Hurama etc., figure prominently in relation to Hattum but do not appear at all among the commercial partners of Hattuš.

Overall, the name Hattum does not seem to have had any specific geopolitical meaning, but likely indicated a vague geographic region that comprised multiple political realities, including Hattuš as well as other city-states.[27] Yet Hattum also had a clearly distinct place in Old Assyrian representations of Anatolia. This is best illustrated by the verdict kt 87/k 275 that prohibited the sale of a female slave in (the land of) Kaneš, but not in either Hattum or the "Land".[28] This document would thus make Hattum stand out, not only from Kaneš, the main hub of the Old Assyrian network, but also from "the Land" in general, meaning here "the rest of Anatolia".[29]

The above discussion can thus be summarised as follows:

1) Hattum is the only Anatolian toponym in the Old Assyrian corpus indicating a land but not a corresponding city.
2) Hattum was not a territorial dependency of Hattuš, nor a term synonymous with it.

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[25] Dercksen, 2001, on noting the complementarity between Hattum, never attested as a "city" and Hattuš, which conversely is never attested as a "land". Advocating a different perspective now generally discredited, Landsberger (1950a–b) proposed that Hattuš was only the city and Hattum indicated a larger regional unit, virtually corresponding to Anatolia as a whole.

[26] Barjamovic, 2011: 294–295.

[27] Barjamovic, 2011: 158–159.

[28] *šu-ma a-na Ḫa-tim lu a-na ma-tim am-tám ri-de₈-e i-na Kà-ni-iš ù ma-at Kà-ni-iš lá ta-da-an-ší* ("take the slave-girl to either Hattum or the Land, but do not sell her in Kaneš or in the land of Kaneš"). Hecker, 1997: 165–167; Veenhof, 2008: 18.

[29] Barjamovic, 2011: 161–162. *Contra* Landsberger 1950a–b: see footnote above.

3) Hattum was not a politically coherent territory, but nonetheless indicated a specific geographic region, distinct from the rest of Anatolia and likely corresponding to the Kızılırmak area.

These points raise a further question: if not a political territory on its own, what was the regional specificity of Hattum that made it stand out in the Old Assyrian "mental map" of Anatolia? This question induces us to consider the possible origins of the name Hattum/Hatti. A first hypothesis would suggest some connection with the semantic field of "silver", due to the rebus spelling [URU]KÙ. BABBAR-*TI* by which the toponym Hatti is often rendered in Hittite texts. It has been proposed that the logogram KÙ.BABBAR, "silver", reflected a putative Hattian stem with this meaning, which, however, is never attested.[30] The spelling [URU]KÙ.BABBAR-*TI* appears quite late, in the 14th–13th century BCE.[31] At this point in time, Hattian as a spoken language was waning and with it any reliable memory of the etymology of the term Hatti. For the moment, therefore, the semantic connection Hattum/Hatti = "silver" should be left aside as a meaningful clue for explaining the origin of the term.

Another possibility is that the Old Assyrian term Hattum preserved the memory of a prehistoric regional polity that was already dissolved by the beginning of the Kārum period. If so, one might be tempted to see traces of such polity in the richly famous necropoleis of the 3rd millennium BCE found at Alaca Höyük and numerous other locales of the Kızılırmak basin.[32] However, the settlements to which these wealthy burials were attached are quite modest and hardly the vestiges of regional or even local forms of early statehood.[33] Therefore, despite their oft-repeated epithet "royal", the tombs of Alaca Höyük *vel sim.* are now generally interpreted as expressions of the prestige of local elites attached to individual centres cooperating and competing with each other.[34]

Generally speaking, the political situation we may picture for Central Anatolia in the 3rd millennium BCE was probably not dissimilar from the one documented by the Old Assyrian records: a fragmented landscape of conflicting polities based on nucleated settlements. The archaeological record of the 3rd millennium BCE in fact bears no definite trace of regionally extensive political systems. It is true that a certain degree of cultural convergence coupled with the emergence complex urban societies reached an apex towards the late 3rd millennium BCE.[35] Significantly, however, the Kızılırmak area seems to have played a marginal role in these developments. The region, for example, had only a minor and late involvement in

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[30] Kammenhuber, 1969: 124.
[31] Weeden, 2011: 244; Kryzseń, 2017: 215, Table 3; Klinger, 1996: 88.
[32] For a recent synthetic evaluation of this evidence in the broader Anatolian context, see Bachhuber, 2015: 83–106.
[33] Düring, 2010: 292.
[34] Bachhuber, 2015: 97–106.
[35] Düring, 2010: 297–299; Ozdoğan, 2014: 1533–1540.

the diffusion of potter's wheel technology that, starting from the 25th century BCE, was spreading from south-east to north-west Anatolia.[36] On this basis, I would exclude the hypothesis of a prehistoric "kingdom of Hattum".

The just-noted singularity of the Kızılırmak basin against the cultural makeup of late 3rd millennium BCE Anatolia may incidentally provide clues for a more attractive possibility: that the toponym Hattum preserved a trace of a distinct cultural region. In support of this idea, there are hints that Hattum derived from an Anatolian ethnonym, later employed by the Old Assyrian merchants as a geographic denomination. It is agreed that the word Hattum/Hatti shares a root with the Hittite adverbial designation for the Hattian language, *ḫattili*, which could thus be interpreted as "in the language of Hatti". Although not denying this etymological link, Klinger (1996: 90–91) raises the possibility that the word *ḫattili* was created at a late stage of Hittite history, as its earliest attestations do not predate the Hittite Empire period (14th–13th century BCE). However, as Klinger admits, by this time Hattian was an ailing spoken language and certainly no longer a dominant vernacular in Hatti. If so, how could Hatti represent the root for a word designating a language no longer at home therein? With Weeden (2011: 246), one may also wonder "what other designation for 'in Hattian' might one have used in Hittite of the time before *ḫattili* is attested." It is far more logical that the term *ḫattili*, even though appearing in late texts, was created in a period when Hattian was indeed clearly recognisable as a major component of the linguistic landscape of Hatti. In this light, I see no obstacle in considering the derivation of both Hattum/Hatti and *ḫattili* from an original ethnonym for "the Hattian people", which came into use to designate the region inhabited by Hattians.[37] When borrowed by the Old Assyrian merchants, the term Hattum had probably already lost its ethnic connotation, maintaining only its geographic meaning.[38]

4. Conclusion

The evidence examined in this article suggests that the region known as Hattum/Hatti in 2nd millennium BCE sources, broadly corresponding to the Kızılırmak basin, already formed a distinct regional entity before its political unification

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[36] Türkteki, 2014; Massa, 2016: 14–156.

[37] Kryszeń (2017: 219) argues that both Hattum/Hatti and *ḫattili* derived from a stem **hat(t)-*, shared by other toponyms of supposed Hattian origin, such as Hattuš and Hatten.

[38] As mentioned above, Hittite sources point to a strong symbiosis between Hittites and Hattians in linguistic and, if possible, broader cultural terms which likely predated by several centuries the formation of the Hittite tablets archives. Toponymic evidence further corroborates this picture. For example, the toponym Šuppiluliya, already attested in the Old Assyrian records, has an obvious Hittite etymology and designated a town situated not far from Hattuš (Barjamovic, 2011: 283–284). Am/nkuwa, also occurring in Old Assyrian sources, is the Hittite version of the Hattian toponym Hanikka, attached to a town located within the Kızılırmak bend and probably belonging to Hattum/Hatti (Kryszeń, 2016: 288–293).

under the Hittites. The basis for such distinction was probably cultural, and the Old Assyrian term Hattum likely derived from an ethnonym identifying the "land of the Hattians". The term Hattum, and its usage in Old Assyrian sources, may thus reflect the existence of a sort of cultural frontier between the Kızılırmak basin and the rest of Anatolia, perhaps inherited from the cultural landscape of the 3rd millennium BCE.

Between the 17th and 16th centuries BCE, the Kızılırmak basin became the land of Hatti/Hattuša, and formed the political core of the Hittite kingdom that hegemonised the rest of Central Anatolia. From this development emerged an administrative organisation based on a core-periphery dialectic, reflected in the Hittite Laws in the opposition between Hatti and the rest of Central Anatolia, indicated by the geographic terms Luwiya and Pala.

Yet, this core-periphery dichotomy was not just an abstract repartition of the Hittite domain but an adaptation to the new political scenario of the old cultural frontier between Hattum and the surrounding regions. This situation is especially evident in the case of Luwiya, whose intended "boundary" with Hatti was indeed a fuzzy frontier region including the river (Kızılırmak) and its shores. Luwiya likely had a vaguer meaning than Pala. In fact, while Pala and its related language (*palaumnili*) had a geographical reference in a well attested city, *i.e.* Pala, and its district, located in the western Pontus,[39] Luwiya is never attested outside the Laws. The use of Luwiya to indicate a region and its clear etymological relationship with the adverb *luwili*, "in Luwian", would suggest developments typologically parallel to those inferred for Hattum: the term originated as a genuine ethnogeographical designation for the "Luwian lands" and was then generalised to become a geographic definition, not necessarily imbued with ethnic connotations.

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