

A Historical Geography of Anatolia in the Old Assyrian Colony Period

By Gojko Barjamovic (Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications 38). Pp. xviii + 519, figs. 79, graphs 29, tables 39, maps 23. Museum Tusulanum Press, Copenhagen 2011. DKK 1000. ISBN 978-87-635-3645-5 (cloth).

The settlement history of the Middle Bronze Age on the central Anatolian plateau is poorly understood, despite a relative wealth of survey data (75–6, map 5) (add B.S. Düring and C. Glatz, “The Cide Archaeological Project 2009: First Results,” *Anatolia Antiqua* 18 [2010] 203–13). A revised 2005 University of Copenhagen Ph.D. thesis, “this book hopes to show how essential an overall familiarity with the system and organisation of the Assyrian trade is to a correct interpretation of the historical geography” (57) of Anatolia during the Assyrian Colony period. This is a novel approach to an often-studied subject that results in some fresh attempts in proposing site identifications for place names known from the Old Assyrian textual record. Most importantly, based on considerations regarding the trade with copper from the Black Sea coast (364–66, 373–75), a position at Üçhöyük near Bolvadin (407) is proposed for the city of Purušhaddum, which has traditionally been sought 250 km to the east at Achemhöyük on the southeastern tip of the Salt Lake. Barjamovic’s view that Purušhaddum must be situated farther west has since found acceptance among leading specialists such as Michel (“Karum Period on the Plateau,” in S.R. Steadman and G. McMahon, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Anatolia* [Oxford 2011] 316). Barjamovic argues that the system of trade was organized in relation to this city as well as two others that functioned as regional market centers (413): Durhumit, which he locates in the Merzifon Plain close to the Pontic copper ores (261–65), and Kaneš (Kültepe).

According to the present excavator of Kaneš, Fikri Kulakoğlu (Steadman and McMahon 2011, 1028), a staggering 23,500 texts in cuneiform script and the Old Assyrian dialect of the Akkadian language have been unearthed in the Assyrian merchant settlement (*kārum*) attached to this capital city of a small regional state in the Kayseri region. Barjamovic’s study is based on 9,500 documents: 4,500 published sources

and a further unpublished 5,000 texts available in preliminary editions to the members of the Old Assyrian Text Project who are preparing their publication (59). Barjamovic also makes use of the few Old Assyrian texts found elsewhere in Anatolia (56) and draws extensively on later Hittite materials, as there is a high degree of continuity in the toponymy from Middle to Late Bronze Age (61).

Of the “hundreds of toponyms attested in the Old Assyrian sources,” Barjamovic selected “some 35 places” that promised the possibility of their successful identification either because they are “mentioned a significant number of times” in the texts or because they can be linked up with later toponymy (70). He has opted for a geographical presentation of his material, grouping together “the lands east of Kaneš” (87–240), including Kaneš itself, and “the lands north and west of Kaneš” (241–408) and arranging the toponyms within these sections following geographical considerations. Table 39 is a good starting point for those who do not want to read the massive volume cover to cover, as it sums up his identifications for 39 toponyms (including the few certain equations that are based on finds of Old Assyrian and/or Hittite texts there: Amkuwa = Alishar Höyük; Hattuš = Boğazköy; Kaneš = Kültepe; Tappagaš = Maşat Höyük). Cross-references to the main discussions of the sites would have been an immensely helpful addition to this table, as not all places are treated in separate sections; instead, the reader has to consult the very detailed index (477–519), under “texts”; “Akkadian, Hittite, and Sumerian glossary”; “persons”; “gods”; “places”; and “general.” A diagram gives a schematic overview of these sites and their connections, including river crossings (fig. 49 [“Šalahšuwa” in the top left corner needs to be corrected to “Šalatuwar”]), and most have been placed on the loose physical map accompanying the volume.

The methodology combines a close reading of the textual sources with a topographical approach based

on Barjamovic's travels in the region. River crossings play a major role in the argument. Table 2 lists fords, ferries, and bridges, the last an architectural feature that is rarely associated with the early second millennium B.C.E. (cf. A. Bagg, "Brücken im Alten Orient: 2000 Jahre Brückenbaugeschichte," in M. Prell, ed., *Archäologie der Brücken* [Regensburg 2011] 2–7), as are proper overland roads, for whose existence Barjamovic argues convincingly on the basis of evidence for the use of heavy wagons (21–3, 44–8). The picturesque descriptions of the Old Assyrian donkey caravans trekking through the mountains normally omit mention of these four-wheeled, ox-drawn vehicles with a capacity of 300–1,500 kg. Barjamovic's analysis results in flow charts linking up toponyms that are in a second step transferred to a physical map. He briefly discusses a 1971 attempt to employ a statistical gravity model for this data set (67) but does not explore computational modeling otherwise. Given his key objective of linking up the necessities of trade with geography, a cost surface model would have provided a valuable research tool (A. Bevan, "Computational Models for Understanding Movement and Territory," in V. Mayoral Herrera and S. Celestino Pérez, eds., *Tecnologías de información geográfica y análisis arqueológico del territorio* [Mérida 2011] 383–94).

The reconstruction of Old Assyrian and Hittite geography is a hotbed of scholarly debate with surprisingly few fixed points; the recourse to later materials (63) offers on occasion a way forward. Here, Barjamovic's analysis tends to be less careful, and his approach can often be criticized as no less "undefined and commonsensical" (65) than that of previous commentators. It should, above all, be stressed that numerous place names in the region east of Kaneš survive into the Iron Age, linked to the continuing presence of Luwian-speaking population groups there, while the toponymy to the west and north of Kaneš is marked by change, likely the by-product of Phrygian settlement in the region (cf., L. Kealhofer and P. Grave, "The Iron Age in the Central Anatolian Plateau," in Steadman and McMahon 2011, 415–42; M.

Özdoğan, "Eastern Thrace: The Contact Zone Between Anatolia and the Balkans," in Steadman and McMahon 2011, 673). I find it difficult to accept, for example, that Tegarama in the Old Assyrian and Hittite sources is not the same place as Iron Age Tagarimu (130–32), which Luwian and Neo-Assyrian sources position in the Elbistan Plain (S. Yamada, "The City of Togarma in Neo-Assyrian Sources," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 33 [2006] 223–36 [missing from the bibliography despite a reference to "Yamada 2006" in n. 417]), as the earlier texts do not necessitate the assumption of Tegarama's direct proximity to Isuwa (Elaziğ region) (see also A.-M. Wittke, *Mušker und Phryger: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Anatoliens vom 12. bis zum 7. Jh. v. Chr.* [Wiesbaden 2004]). At times, acceptance or rejection of an identification seems dangerously based on personal preference: in the case of Purušhaddum, Barjamovic rejects identification with a city Parzuta in a Luwian inscription of the eighth century B.C.E. from Topada near Nevşehir (378) but sees support for his own localization of Purušhaddum west of Eber Gölü in that lake's equation with Buhairat Busuranda ("Lake Busuranda") in an Arabic source of the 12th century C.E. (408). I find both suggestions equally unconvincing.

This is an ambitious and important study that is essential reading on Anatolia in the Middle and Late Bronze Age and on the long-distance trade with tin and copper in the early second millennium B.C.E. The transregional importance of the market centers Purušhaddum, Durhumit, and Kaneš emerges very clearly, and this should also stimulate the debates concerning the formation of what we call the Old Hittite state.

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