

Chapter 5

Central East: Archaeology
Alacahöyük, Eskişehir, Ortaköy, Maşathöyük

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The geographical scope of this chapter reaches from the Alaca region as far as Turhal and the Çamlıbel pass, where it meets the border with the area treated in the chapters on the East (archaeology chapter 6; philology chapter 16). The region concentrates on the area of the intersection of the Turkish vilayets of Çorum (north), Yozgat (south) and Tokat (east). It includes the important excavated sites of Eskişehir, Ortaköy/Şapinuwa (see chapter 3) and Maşathöyük. The following chapter will look at the evidence from this region for the geography of the Hittite state as derived from consideration of topography, archaeological survey and archaeological excavation.¹

Topography

The topography of the region is tectonically defined by its location to the south of the North Anatolian Strike-slip Fault Zone, specifically on a splay of the same extending northeast to southwest along three parallel fault lines in a “fishbone” arrangement.² In the east of the region these fault lines accompany the narrow valleys and plains between the parallel northeast to southwest oriented mountain ranges of the Kırklar Dağı (highest point 1790m), Karadağ (highest point 1532m), Buzluk Dağları (otherwise referred to as the Otogeçe Dağları and the Alan Dağları at their southern end, highest point 1403m), and the Deveci Dağları (highest point 1638m), each with multiple peaks. The mountains and their surrounding plains are rich in sandstone, marl and limestone, and contain both lower and higher plateaus over which settlements are spread today. This is a different terrain to that of the area directly to the west towards Alaca.

The west of the region consists of the high plains on the Central Anatolian plateau at an average height of around 1100m and presents quite a different topographical setting. Volcanic igneous rocks including augite and hornblende andesites characterise the geology of the western side of the area around the sites of Alacahöyük and Eskişehir.³ The two sites are separated by the ridge of the Elmalı Dağı, over which a route most likely led passing near the Hittite dam at Gölpınar.⁴ This dam is watered by underground springs. To the east flows the Çorum Çayı, a tributary of the Çekerek, and into it from a south-north direction run its own tributaries, the Alaca Çayı and the Büyüköz. However, from Alaca through to Tokat, along the Çorum Çayı and then the Çekerek, the main topographical orientation of the whole region is broadly from west to east rather than north to south.

The landscape of the area between the Zile-Buzluk Dağları to the north and the Deveci-Akdağları to the south is a complex patchwork of plains and rocky outcrops characterised by limestone, marl and gypsum sediments through which numerous rivers have cut their way. In the west, where the region is defined by the middle course of the Çekerek, extends the Maşat Plain

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¹ Thanks are due to Professor M. Drahor of Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, İzmir, for consultation on questions of physical geography.

² The Almus Fault Zone, the Ezinepazarı(-Sungurlu) Fault Zone (also referred to as Kırıkkale-Erbaa) and the Taşova-Çorum Fault Zone. Koçbulut, Kavak and Tatar 2015. The site of Ortaköy-Şapinuwa is located only 10km away from the Kırıkkale-Erbaa faultline.

³ Atakay Gündoğdu 2009.

⁴ E.g. Çınaroğlu and Çelik 2006.

bordering to its southeast the Boztepe depression and the Silisözü Valley, to its north the Reşadiye depression. To its west beyond Çekerek the Dagni Dağı provides a limit, which also functions as a massive dividing feature between north and south. To the east there is the plain of Zile, geographically separated off from the Maşat plain by the Karayün and İtyelmez ridges. Through the latter of these runs the Honar Boğazı, following the Honar Çayı into the area of the Zile plain, which it drains. The two areas, Zile and Maşat, thus form quite different geographical areas, although it should not be understood from this that they are in any sense disconnected from each other by impassable terrain.⁵

The whole region is bordered by the basin of the Yeşilirmak (Hittite Kummešmaha?) to the east, while the main riverine feature is provided by its tributary, the Çekerek (classical Skylax, possibly Hittite Zuliya?). This waterway flows from the area of Çamlıbel in the Deveci Dağları along the southern flank of the Deveci mountains before turning sharply north round the western end of the Deveci ridge towards the modern town of Çekerek and then looping west by Reşadiye, before taking another sharp turn to the north at Kazankaya. Here it cuts through the outlying highground of the southeastern Buzluk Dağları (specifically the Alan Dağları) in an impressive snaking canyon from Kazankaya through to İncesu, where it opens out once again into a fertile although narrow alluvial plain and turns northeast to continue up past modern-day Göynücek and the site of Oluzhöyük to the point at which it joins the Yeşilirmak just south of Amasya.

There are several tributaries of the Çekerek, including the Özderesi, which flows parallel to the southeastern slopes of the Karadağ range past Ortaköy (Hittite Šapinuwa) to join the Çekerek north of İncesu. By flowing parallel to the Karadağ, as well as to the Çekerek, the Özderesi valley provides a passable route to the northeast (eventually Amasya), whereas the canyon on the Çekerek prevents large-scale land-based traffic. Another tributary, the Aştavul, flows down from the Karadağ near Cevizli to join the Çekerek only 1.5km north of its meeting with the Özderesi. Just 1km north of the confluence with the Aştavul a further tributary joins the Çekerek, this time from the northern reaches of the Karadağ. This is also the point where the Çekerek turns northeast.

Although the region is mountainous in the classic “horst and graben” style, the low-lying graben between the long mountainous ridges of the Karadağ and Buzluk Dağları are considerably lower than the land to the west towards Hattusa on the plateau. Building A at Ortaköy stands at 788m above sea-level on an intermediate plateau on the mountain side, while the floor of the Özderesi valley in which it is situated is 700m. Kazankaya in the Çekerek valley is at 720m, but north of the Çekerek canyon up towards Göynücek, the valley-floor quickly reaches as little as 400m. By contrast, only 7km to the southwest of Šapinuwa, in the area of Baydığın, the general elevation of the land reaches the more normal Central Anatolian plateau level of 1000-1100m (compare Eskiyapar 979m, Boğazkale village 1025m, Hattuša-Büyükkale 1142m). Following the Çekerek back eastwards from Kazankaya the valley floor stays at around 700m until it reaches the area of Reşadiye and the Maşat plain where the flat areas have elevations of around 900-1000m, before decreasing again through the Boztepe depression and towards the Zile region. This discrepancy in elevation between the Ortaköy region together with its hinterland to the northeast and the rest of the plateau region to the west is reflected in a different, slightly milder climate, especially in winter, as characteristic of the Black Sea region to which it is closer. The valleys of the Özderesi and the northern Çekerek may thus during certain times of year have been a more attractive place to live than Boğazköy-Hattuša, 60km to the southwest and some 300m higher.

In terms of climate this is the area where the Mediterranean and Pontic weather systems meet. According to information from the weather stations at Yozgat (1298m above sea-level) and Tokat (608m above sea-level) rainfall can currently average at 630.4mm (Yozgat) to 480.5mm (Tokat) per annum, with 74.4 and 64mm falling during the summer months respectively. Temperatures fall to -5.6° C (Yozgat) or -2° C (Tokat) during winter. The mountain slopes of the Deveci range are well covered with pine forests (*pinus sylvestris*) at around 14-1500m, beech, juniper and various forms of

⁵ Özçağlar 1989; 1990.

oak.⁶ A similar picture emerges for the area north of the Buzluk Dağları around Ortaköy, with 450mm rainfall yearly over the Çekerek valley, increasing to 550mm on the medium-level mountains, and only 62mm falling over the summer. Pine trees (*pinus sylvestris* at 12-1400m as well as *pinus nigra*) grow abundantly alongside juniper, oak, willow and poplar on the slopes of the Karadağ range.⁷ The marl and limestone soils of the alluvium deposited by the rivers are well suited to agriculture, even if there is not a great deal of agricultural land in the direct vicinity of Ortaköy itself.⁸

Despite the fertile valleys with fruit trees and vines along their slopes and the plains with space for cereals in fields, this area is unlikely to have been important on the grounds of the production of agricultural surplus. Recent evidence for copper-working at Alacahöyük may suggest that the exploitation or processing of mineral deposits for metals was underway here, but the archaeological evidence is otherwise thin on the ground and difficult to interpret.⁹ The region's main importance presumably comes from its function as a corridor towards the northeast.

Surveys

After frequent visits by early travellers, sections of the western part of the area have been surveyed in recent times by A. and M. Süel in the survey which preceded the excavations at Ortaköy-Şapinuwa, and by T. Sipahi and T. Yıldırım, who have surveyed extensively around Çorum, whereas the eastern part was surveyed by T. Özgüç, in the course of the excavations at Maşathöyük, as well as by M. and N. Özsait as part of their extensive surveys in the Tokat and Amasya regions.¹⁰ The survey of G. and F. Summers in the course of the excavations at Kerkenes Dağı also touched on the southwestern parts of the region extending as far as Çekerek and Aydıncık.¹¹ In the following a brief review of the routes and networks of possible LBA sites is given, with the caveat that the dates of the sites are almost entirely established by survey and that the picture could change dramatically after excavation.

The area directly to the east of Hattuşa would appear to have been quite densely populated during some parts of the 2nd millennium BC, with at least thirty sites currently attested between Boğazköy and Ortaköy.¹² Whether one starts east from Hattuşa, taking the steep road up over Yüksekayla, or leaves from Eskiyaşar, it appears that there are two routes to reach Ortaköy, one higher and one lower. Only the latter of these leads also to Maşat. From Hattusa to Eskiyaşar a route passes over an initially steep climb eastwards to Yüksekayla, Küçükhrıka, then north via Suludere, Perçem, Eren/Dedepınarı and then Eskiyaşar.¹³ Only a few kilometers further east another three 2nd millennium höyüks are arranged in a south-north line parallel to the route to Eskiyaşar: Kıplınarhöyük, Bayındırhöyük, Yatankavak Kayapınarhöyük.¹⁴ The traveller probably headed east from Yatankavak, traversing the Alaca Çayı to reach the site of Demircihöyük and then Örükkayahöyük and Bağınardıhöyük (north of Akörenköyü), all three of which are set in the space of 10km.¹⁵

The way is a good deal easier from Eskiyaşar over the plain of Alaca. From Eskiyaşar one can take a more northerly route towards the east, passing sites at Alaca üzeri, Hışırhöyük, Aktoprakhöyük, Akpınarhöyük and Yaylacık Tekke, from where one is on a higher altitude road

⁶ Bingöl *et al.* 2010.

⁷ Kurt *et al.* 1998; Gülersoy and Gülersoy 2016: 493-496.

⁸ Süel 2005a: 679.

⁹ Atakay Gündoğdu 2009.

¹⁰ See references in following paragraphs.

¹¹ The report from the survey is available in the online excavation report of the Kerkenes excavation team, Summers 1998.

¹² M. Yılmaz and H. Serinci (2010: 992) conducted a survey of the literature which counted 26 potentially Hittite period sites in the Alaca region alone that had been recorded in archaeological surveys.

¹³ Sipahi 2013b: 73; Dedepınarıhöyük, Süel 1991: 93.

¹⁴ Kıplınarınarı at Büyük Hırka and Bayındırhöyük noted at Süel 1991: 92-93; an Iron Age tumulus at Yatankavak is also mentioned there. Three sites are documented around Yatankavak at Sipahi and Yıldırım 2010: 448-449, of which only Kayapınarhöyük was recorded as showing Hittite ceramics.

¹⁵ Süel 1990: 343-344.

round to approach Ortaköy from above (via Fığla Tepesi).¹⁶ Directly parallel in a southerly direction to this route eastwards, another route passes the sites of Çalköy, Gökören, Soğucak and Kızılhamzahöyük, and further south again via Kızıllı and Çöplühöyük.¹⁷ The sites appear to cover the Alaca plain in quadratic formations, allowing at least two routes in each direction, southwest to northeast and northwest to southeast.

From Bağınardıhöyük at the latest, and if coming from Hattusa already at Örukayahöyük, the traveller has the choice of three directions. Either one proceeds immediately southeast passing Bolatçikhöyük, Tumbulhöyük at Killik and Mercantepehöyük at Belpınar, and then onwards in the direction of Sorgun.¹⁸ Or one heads east or northeast in order to try to enter the valley of the Özderesi, or again after a little while southeast in order to enter the Maşat Plain by heading to link up with the Çekerek river.

From the region of Bağınardıhöyük a line of höyük-style settlements leads via Çöplü Höyük (6km), Soğucakhöyük (another 8km) to Kızılhamzahöyük (another 4km) at the head of the Özderesi valley. The way down the Özderesi valley is at one point not impossible but quite difficult (coming down to the modern village of Karahacıp), so travel along the upper road without descending to Kızılhamza would be a possibility, as noted above. However, it is possible that there was an alternative, more direct route. Starting from Bozdoğanhöyük (8km northeast of Bağınardıhöyük),¹⁹ or indeed from Çöplü Höyük, and proceeding directly via the modern village of Baydıgın, down the admittedly steep slope into the Özderesi valley at modern-day Karahacıp, could theoretically bring one to Ortaköy in less than a day (18km).²⁰

The route northeast from Ortaköy along the Çekerek and via the Göynücek plain to Amasya would have been used especially in times when control of the areas of the northeast was not secure, as it is well shielded by the Karadağ range. It is populated with large sites, especially at its northern end, that display pottery dating to Middle and/or Late Bronze Age periods, one of which is being excavated. This was clearly an important thoroughfare: Kocamantepe, Ayvalıpınar, Gediksaray, Oluzhöyük (excavated by Ş. Dönmez) and Doğan-tepe.²¹

Turning southeast from Bozdoğanhöyük leads one after 9km to another potentially Hittite period site, Zidankuyhöyük,²² from where one can either travel to the group of large sites at the south of the Kazankaya-İncesu canyon or to the similarly large site of Aydıncık in the plain of Kümbet. Kazankaya was surveyed by T. Özgüç and several mounds as well as an early Hittite cemetery were found nearby.²³ It has been identified with the Hittite toponym Şuppiluliyā by J. Börker-Klähn, which also occurs in Old Assyrian documents from Kültepe and Aşırahöyük and is supposed to have hosted a *wabartum* during the period of Kültepe Level II and a *kārum* during the later Kültepe Ib era.²⁴ Kale/Aydıncık is only 8km to the south of Kazankaya as the crow flies, and the

¹⁶ Alaca üzeri and Yaylacık Tekke: Sipahi and Yıldırım 2012: 205, 208; Hışırhöyük, Akpınarhöyük, Aktoprakhöyük: Süel 1991: 94-95.

¹⁷ Çalköy, Sipahi and Yıldırım 2005: 357; 2nd millennium BC ceramics were found both at Gökörenhöyük and in the fields around (Yıldırım and Sipahi 2011: 39-40); Soğucak, Sipahi and Yıldırım 2012: 206; Kızılhamzahöyük, Süel 1991: 95; Kızıllı, Süel 1991: 94; Çöplühöyük, Süel 1990: 343.

¹⁸ Surveyed by A. Süel 1990: 344-345; Sipahi and Yıldırım 2010: 451. See Sir Gavaz (chapter 14, this volume) for discussion of this route in connection with the identification of Hittite Katapa.

¹⁹ Süel 1990: 343-344, noting 2nd millennium BC ceramics scattered around Bozdoğanhöyük as well as on it.

²⁰ According to currently available information, further sites have not been identified on this route. The slope descends from 1021m at Baydıgın to 930m at Karahacıp in just under 4km.

²¹ For these sites see Özseit 1991; Barjamovic 2011: 386. For Oluzhöyük see Glatz (chapter 7 this volume) and Corti (chapter 16 this volume).

²² See Süel 1990: 344 for the find of a ceramic fragment with a bull's head relief in the fields around Zidankuy Höyük, near the village of Küçük Dona.

²³ Mounds at Kazankaya: Sarıbaba, Göktepe, Karagözlük, cemetery at Güllük, 3km further south small mound at Kümbethöyük. See Özgüç 1978: 69; Özgüç 1982: 143; Börker-Klähn 2014: 137.

²⁴ Börker-Klähn 2014: 138. See Barjamovic (2011: 283-284).

two may have formed a unit of some kind.²⁵ The chronological orientation of the complex of mounds at Kazankaya seems to have been rather Middle Bronze Age or Old Hittite, while Middle Bronze Age through to Iron Age ceramics were found at Aydınçık, which is supposed also to have had a lower city.²⁶ The route from Ortaköy through to either Kazankaya or Aydınçık, on the other hand, is likely to have been rather more strenuous, as it needed to negotiate the southern end of the Buzluk Dağları or Alan Dağı.²⁷

From Aydınçık or Kazankaya one can head southeast towards the town of Çekerek, on the eponymous river, with a medium-sized mound (180x300m).²⁸ The orientation of this mound is rather south, eventually towards Kültepe/Kaneš, than east into the Maşat Plain. For the latter direction the small site of Acıpınarhöyük seems as though it could have been a station on the way, if it can be dated to the Hittite period.²⁹ Almost directly to the east by 15km is the excavated medium-sized site of Maşathöyük (400x225m), and from here a suite of three possibly LBA sites leads further east, parallel to the Deveci mountains and on into the Silisözü valley: Küçüközlü,³⁰ Höyük,³¹ Sinnelik.³² From there one passes between the Deveci and Akdağlar through into the plain of Artova and the site of Boloshöyük situated at the Çamlıbel pass facing south.³³ South of Maşathöyük, directly abutting the mountains, is the small site of Alime Tepesi.³⁴ Occupying a pass leading south through the Deveci range is the site of Hanözü/Ortaburun, where a caravanserai was located, and which was investigated by K. Emre.³⁵

To the northwest of Reşadiye on the lower slopes of the Buzluk Dağları there is a significant site in the region of İğdir, although it is unclear whether this is a settlement that was occupied during the Hittite period.³⁶ A further cluster of potentially LBA sites can be found to the north of the Maşat Plain, between Reşadiye and Zile. Some doubt is now attached to the location of the Çerkezhöyük, named by T. Özgüç as the 2nd höyük after Çekerek in the direction of Zile, between Reşadiye and Zile.³⁷ M. Özsait tentatively supposes it might have been the site of Karayünhöyük (also locally known as Eski Köy Yeri Tepesi or Höyük Tepesi), while stressing that this cannot be known.³⁸ Also in the area, a number of smaller sites are clustered around the Karayün ridge: Dökmetepe, Okçutepe, Gavur Kalesi and Kayapınarın Tepe.³⁹ One might cautiously suppose that the Karayün ridge, around and on which these sites are clustered, had some kind of significance. Northeast from this group and only 10km west of Zile is the multi-period site of Akdoğan-Kaletepe, at the feet of the Buzluk Dağları, which has now apparently been damaged by illegal diggings.⁴⁰ The medium-sized mound at

²⁵ Börker-Klähn 2014: 138 (13km).

²⁶ Özgüç 1982: 143; Börker-Klähn 2014: 139.

²⁷ Börker-Klähn 2014: 134.

²⁸ Özgüç 1982: 143; the Kerkenes survey team (Summers 1998) found that there did not seem to be a major site in the vicinity of Çekerek.

²⁹ Özsait 1999: 75; Özsait and Özsait 2001: 543 (2nd millennium BC attested, 90m diameter, 4m high).

³⁰ Özsait 1999: 77.

³¹ The small to medium-sized site of Höyük/Üyük (mound 170x200m) is mentioned in survey literature as one of the more significant in the region: Özgüç 1982: 141; Özsait 1999: 80.

³² Sinnelik, Özsait 1999: 80; Özsait and Özsait 2001: 544-545 (most of the ceramics Colony and Old Hittite periods). Further 2nd millennium BC sites in this area are Destimelik and Taşlıca (Özsait 1999).

³³ For this site see Alparslan (ch. 16, this volume).

³⁴ Özsait 2000a: 76.

³⁵ Özgüç 1982: 142; Emre 1992.

³⁶ Börker-Klähn 2014: 137, 141 (= Karahna?); Cilağın-tepe: M. Özsait notes few but mainly EBA ceramic finds (2007: 455). The other sites in the plain of İğdir appear to be mostly EBA and Roman according to what has been observed so far (Özsait loc. cit.).

³⁷ Özgüç 1982: 71. See also reference to Çerkezhöyük at Börker-Klähn 2014: 137.

³⁸ Özsait 1999: 77. Dimensions (loc. cit.) 90x125m, 12m high, although from the image on Google Earth the site looks as though it could be slightly larger, possibly even including a demarcated lower city area to the west (40° 14' 01" 35° 44' 20").

³⁹ Özsait 1999.

⁴⁰ Özsait 1999: 78; Özsait 2007: 456.

Zile (Roman Zela) is the same size as that at Maşat, if not even a little larger, and must have been of some importance.⁴¹ It has been associated with Hittite Anziliya.⁴² The three largest sites in the area are Maşat and Höyük/Üyük, the two of which are close to each other in the southwest near to the Deveci Dağları, and Zile to the northeast close to the Buzluk Dağları, with Boloshöyük being a large site at the border to the next region towards the south.

Excavations

Excavations have been conducted at four sites in this region, which are also among the most significant Hittite sites in central Anatolia next to Boğazköy-Hattuša: Alacahöyük, Eskiypar, Maşathöyük and Ortaköy. The excavations at Alacahöyük are among the most iconic and significant in the history of the Turkish Republic.⁴³ The original excavations at Eskiypar and those at Maşathöyük belong to an earlier phase of archaeology and have provided the bedrock for much of what we know about the Hittite state. New excavations at Eskiypar (directed by T. Sipahi since 2010) offer the opportunity to revisit and clarify with modern methods some of the material of the previous excavations as well as bringing a wealth of new information. The excavations at Ortaköy have been ongoing since 1990 to the present day and have produced startling results, for an assessment of some of which and further literature the reader is referred to chapter 3, this volume.

After numerous visits by the early foreign travellers from W.J. Hamilton (1835) onwards, some preliminary excavations on the mound of Alacahöyük (277x310m) had partially cleared the Sphinx Gate (Perrot and Guillaume in 1872) at the south and revealed a postern gate at the west of the mound (Winckler and Makridi in 1908). Turkish excavations at Alacahöyük started under R. Arık and H. Koşay in 1935, were continued until 1948, and resumed from 1963 to 1978.⁴⁴ One motivation for the excavations was to find if the ruins corresponded to the Hittite city of Arinna.⁴⁵ The mound was covered with a village of some 200 households, which was gradually removed until 1968. The extensive and famous Early Bronze Age remains including significant tombs finish with level 5. The Hittite levels (2, 3a, 3b, 4) were sealed in parts by extensive burning at both beginning and end and in addition level 4 appears to have been largely destroyed by a fire with extensive in situ finds signalling an abrupt end, although at least one part of the mound was spared.⁴⁶ Level 4 contained among other things a group of three large stone and plaster-lined silos.

Level 3 contained to the northwest of the Sphinx gate a “small palace”, the earlier phases of which appear to have been occupied by workshops including remains of iron slag.⁴⁷ A sewage system made of clay pipes in channels lined and covered with stone slabs was continually in use between levels 2-3b, and an earlier sewage system with the same orientation was found in level 4.⁴⁸ A “temple-palace” complex to the northeast of the Sphinx Gate was uncovered, the column-bases of the palace hall being contemporaneous with the Sphinx gate, both belonging to level 2.⁴⁹ This has more recently been argued to be a regular palace rather than a combination of temple and palace, although the current excavator still retains this label.⁵⁰

⁴¹ Özsaıt 2007: 452-3.

⁴² Alp 1991b: 9.

⁴³ Çınaroğlu and Çelik 2010.

⁴⁴ Main publications of the earlier excavations: Arık 1937a; Koşay 1938; 1951; Koşay and Akok 1966; 1973; For brief summaries see Gürsan-Salzman 1992: 2-3; Özgüç 2002; Mielke 2011: 1039-1042.

⁴⁵ Arık 1937b: 211.

⁴⁶ Burning was absent for the transition between EBA Level 5 and Hittite Level 4 in Trench B, Squares 40-42/XXXVI-XL, Gürsan-Salzman 1992: 29-30. Similarly the Building E Complex appears to have escaped the burning of level 4, Gürsan-Salzman 1992: 35-36.

⁴⁷ Gürsan-Salzman 1992: 25.

⁴⁸ Gürsan-Salzman 1992: 50.

⁴⁹ Gürsan-Salzman 1992: 24.

⁵⁰ Mielke 2011: 1041-42, with previous literature; Çınaroğlu and Çelik 2011: 186.

The new excavations conducted since 1997 under the direction of A. Çınaroğlu have done much to deepen and expand the perspective produced by the earlier excavations.⁵¹ New silos have been discovered that belong to the level 2 “temple-palace” building, reinforcing its function as a distributive palatial centre. The excavation of a metal-workshop has also been conducted over a number of years. It appears to have been in use at least in the first quarter of the 2nd millennium BC and quite possibly also in the Middle Hittite period, if references to “Hittite period slag” in the provisional reports can be interpreted in this way.⁵² The excavation team has also done much to investigate and restore the Hittite dam at Gölpınar to the southeast of the site, on the way to Eskişar.

Eskişar is situated 10.5km southeast of Alacahöyük, 20.7km from Boğazköy and 42km from Ortaköy.⁵³ After a sondage made by E. Akurgal, who was working at Alacahöyük in 1945, excavations under R. Temizer of Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations began in 1968 and continued through until 1983. The impulse for the excavations came from the find of a relief vase with four bulls on the mound, which was at that time covered with a modern village. Much of the effort during the early excavations was associated with moving the village, as had also been done at Alacahöyük, off the mound. Further excavations on the north of the mound were conducted by Çorum Museum from 1989-1992. The most recent excavations have been conducted by T. Sipahi of Ankara University since 2010.

Two Early Bronze Age levels were uncovered, yielding a number of items of metalwork with connections from the Aegean to Mesopotamia.⁵⁴ A large Old Hittite residential area was revealed in the northeast sector of the mound, Eskişar first excavation levels VIa-c.⁵⁵ Here a large inventory of different types of Old Hittite ceramic vessels were found, including some of the classic and defining forms of the Old Hittite ceramic repertoire.⁵⁶ Notable is the cup enclosing a naked seated female figurine with a headdress consisting of discs, found in the earliest phase VIc.⁵⁷ Furthermore a seal-impression corresponding to the style of the well-known Tyskiewicz group was found on a bulla in area T/6.⁵⁸ This type can now be dated with more precision due to the find of a similarly styled sealing from Büklükale from a layer dated to the early 16th century BC or earlier.⁵⁹

The new excavations have aimed at refining the stratigraphy.⁶⁰ A tablet found in North Sector level K2 (Middle Hittite) in 2011 contains, according to the assessment of A. Süel, part of a letter that mentions both Arinna and Tahurpa, the latter being one proposal for the Hittite name of Eskişar.⁶¹ Of course, this find does not prove the identification, at least for the time being. A number of seal-impressions have also been found at Eskişar in the new excavations, which further illustrate the early use of hieroglyphic writing at Eskişar as well as documenting a close connection with seal-use at Boğazköy-Hattuša.⁶²

Preliminary excavations at Maşathöyük 20km southwest of Zile were conducted by E. Akurgal in 1944, after a clay tablet was found on the surface site.⁶³ They were resumed by T. Özgüç

⁵¹ Reports from the excavations can be found in the series *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* from 1999 onwards.

⁵² Çınaroğlu and Çelik 2011: 190.

⁵³ Sipahi 2011: 80.

⁵⁴ Özgüç and Temizer 1993; Sipahi 2011: 81.

⁵⁵ Temizer apud Özgüç 1988: XXVIII; Özgüç 1999a: 1. VIa-c included two Old Hittite levels and one Middle Hittite, while Level V was considered Empire Period.

⁵⁶ Özgüç 1999a.

⁵⁷ Özgüç 1999a: 3-4; Sipahi 2013b.

⁵⁸ Dinçol and Dinçol 1988.

⁵⁹ Weeden 2016.

⁶⁰ The stratigraphy of the recent excavations is still provisional, but excavations in the North Sector have three Old Hittite levels, K3-5, and a Middle Hittite level K2. Sipahi 2014: 49-50.

⁶¹ Sipahi 2012b: 50 with fn. 9.

⁶² Sipahi 2013b: fig. 1; Sipahi and Weeden in press.

⁶³ Güterbock 1944.

during the 1970s and 1980s, and are primarily published in two volumes as well as several articles.⁶⁴ The most significant philological finds from the site are dealt with in chapter 15.⁶⁵

The site is built onto a limestone outcrop on top of a 30m high natural mound and contains a citadel and a lower city, which is partially spread over the slope of the hill on three terraces.⁶⁶ Four Hittite levels were uncovered at Maşathöyük, with a Middle Bronze Age/*kārum* period level V, with the most impressive finds being associated with Level III, dated to the end of the 15th/beginning of the 14th centuries BC. The palace building with two wings preserved flanking a large colonnaded courtyard is built to fit the contours of the bedrock. According to Özgüç's interpretation, the palace would have had two floors above ground level towards the northwest and northeast, where it was built directly onto the bedrock at the highest point of the mound, thus presenting an imposing aspect to anyone approaching from Boğazköy, by extension also to anyone approaching from the northeast.⁶⁷ The east side of the palace contained rooms with large storage pithoi, four of which showed notations incised after firing, possibly indications of quantity.⁶⁸ The Middle Hittite archive from Maşat comes from two rooms and the courtyard on the eastern side, and was presumably kept in an upper storey.⁶⁹

Much of the western part of the palace was overlaid and may have been destroyed by part of a large building containing an altar belonging to Hittite Level II, which should have been built by Šuppiliuma I, according to the find of a seal-impression of that ruler, after the violent destruction of Maşat level III.⁷⁰ Later Hittite buildings on the eastern side of the complex ("Buildings of Group A") are much smaller and not so monumental, but also seem to have been destroyed by fire, with various cooking pots left intact, around 1200 BC (Maşat Hittite Level I).⁷¹ Here a number of seal-impressions from the 13th century BC were found which have yet to be published.

Lower City Level V (17th century BC, according to the excavator) on the slopes of the citadel shows smaller houses with mainly timber-beam construction. Again this level, which seems to have spread all around the slopes, was destroyed by fire. Further Hittite levels through to level I were also identified in these terraced slope areas, but a level corresponding to V in the lower city does not appear to be attested yet on the citadel itself. A large building with a courtyard was excavated in southeast sector level III (corresponding to level II on the citadel) and appears to have continued in use until the end of Hittite level I, when it also appears to have been burned.

Conclusions

Interpretation of the philological data has suggested that Maşathöyük-Tapikka was a border town, due to the fact that it was the seat of a *BĒL MADGALTI*, "watchpost commander", and it is sometimes labelled as such in archaeological literature.⁷² If Maşathöyük was a border town, only 116km from Boğazköy-Hattuša as the crow flies, then other mounds in the region that were inhabited at the same time, may equally have to be considered border installations, particularly Zile, which is considerably more exposed towards the northeast. In the parallel-running valleys of the Çekerek and Özderesi on the other side of the Buzluk Dağları, it may also be necessary to consider those settlements too, as essentially occupying border positions, at least during some historical phases: Ayvalıpınar, Oluzhöyük, Gediksaray, Kocamantepe, Ortaköy-Şapinuwa. In the last case the capital city status that the king and government's presence during the reign of Tudhaliya II (III) accords the settlement attests to an aggressive executive mobility that can perhaps be compared to Neo-Assyrian king Sargon II's attempt to move to a capital at the northern Dūr-Šarrukīn (Khorsabad) at the height of his altercation with Urartu.

⁶⁴ Özgüç 1978; 1982.

⁶⁵ Özgüç 1982: 73.

⁶⁶ Özgüç 1982: 73.

⁶⁷ Özgüç 1982: 76.

⁶⁸ Özgüç 1982: 77.

⁶⁹ Özgüç 1978.

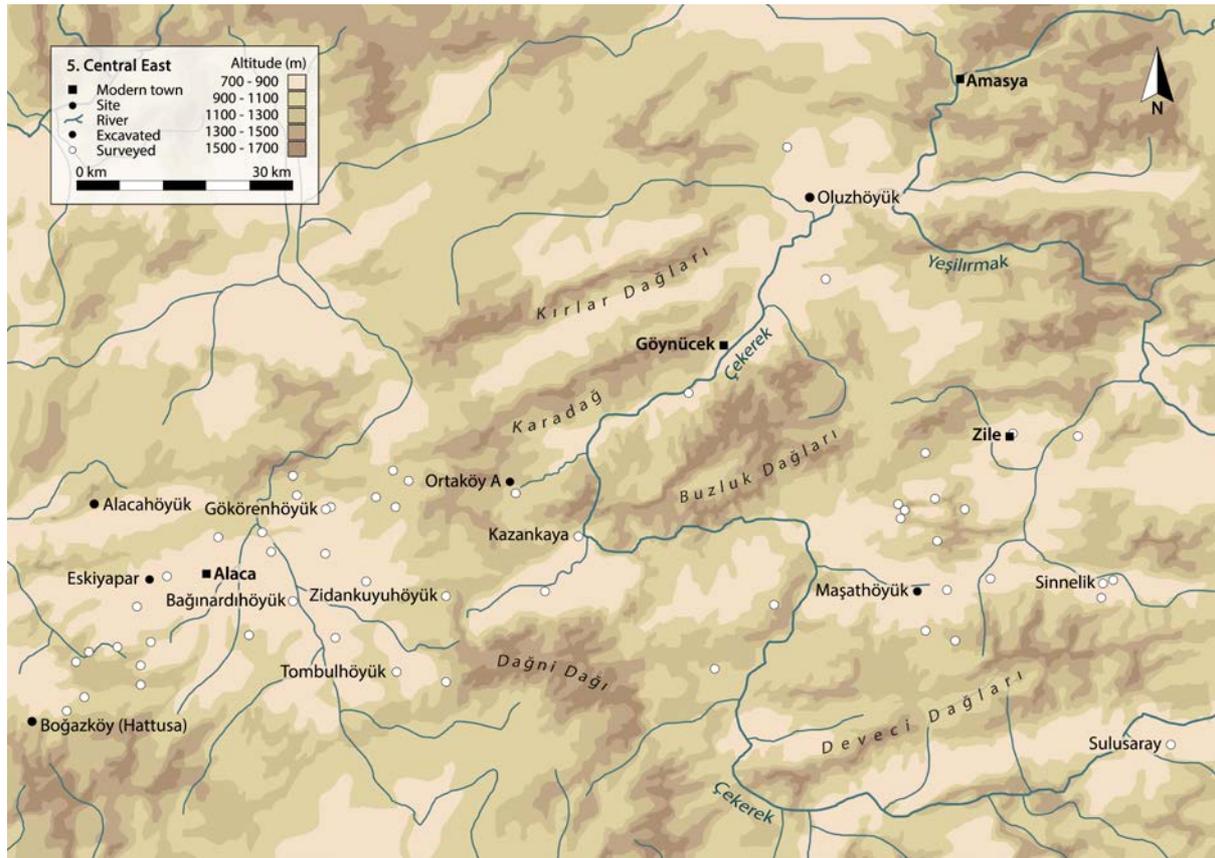
⁷⁰ Özgüç 1982: 78.

⁷¹ Özgüç 1982: 77.

⁷² Özgüç 1980: 308; Mielke 2011: 1045.

The number of settlements between Boğazköy-Hattuša and Ortaköy-Şapinuwa (56km) that have been established by survey as being likely to belong to the LBA is considerably higher than the number of settlements thus far detected between the complex Aydıncık-Kazankaya and Zile (52km). According to the current count there are roughly thirty-five settlements that may be attributable to the Hittite period to be found in the first group, and only fifteen in the second.⁷³ The settlements in the Maşat-Zile area are also clustered into four main groups (Maşat, the group around the Karayün ridge, Zile, the group on the route out into the Artova plain), rather than being spread relatively equally over the landscape as they are in the Alaca plain and up the Özderesi valley. Naturally this may be a problem of perspective due to the nature of the survey evidence, but there does appear to be a different profile to the settlement distribution of the Alaca plain, which may itself also support the idea of the Maşat-Zile area as a border region, facing the central Hattusa area on the west, concentrations of Kaška to the northeast, and the provincial Upper Land to the southeast and east.

⁷³ This figure is arrived at for the Maşat-Zile area by counting those sites that are either explicitly mentioned as Hittite or Late Bronze Age in the survey literature referred to above, as well as those that are mentioned as being second millennium, but excluding those which are specified in the literature as Middle Bronze Age without referring to Late Bronze Age. It is clear that this is an imperfect tool. However, the impression is quite apparent from the surveys conducted by M. and N. Özsaıt that the majority of sites in the Maşat-Zile region are Early Bronze Age and/or Roman.



INSERT FIG. 5.1

Map of Central East area with surveyed potential LBA sites and excavated LBA sites.



INSERT FIG. 5.2

5.2: The view from the hill above Eskişapar to the southwest.

