

# Acemhöyük in the Old Hittite Kingdom: From the Commercial Center to Rural Settlement

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[The findings obtained as a result of the excavations carried out in Acemhöyük, located within the borders of Yeşilova town in Aksaray province, showed that there was a central settlement in this place during the period of the Old Assyrian Trade Colonies. This city, which has been excavated since 1962, is one of the largest mounds in Anatolia by its size and has been characterized by the excavations carried out in three areas, settlement, mound, lower city and the Arıbaş Cemetery. The period of the Old Assyrian Trade Colonies, which was the most important period of the mound, is represented by three levels (III, II, and I). However, some architectural remains and small finds uncovered during the excavations provide clues that Levels II and I were used in a parallel period with the Old Hittite Kingdom. In this article, a new perspective is presented by evaluating the relevant findings analogically.]

**Keywords:** Acemhöyük, Hittite, Hattuşili I, Lower Land, Anatolia.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. A Brief Description of Acemhöyük

Acemhöyük is approximately 42 hectares in size and 953 meters above sea level, with an appearance consisting of four elevations formed on the main mound body.<sup>1</sup> There are royal palaces of rulers, service buildings, workshops, kitchens, and some private houses in this area. During the excavations in the mound that have been continuing since 1962, a total of 12 levels have been detected from the Early Bronze Age to the period of the Old Assyrian Trade Colonies (hereafter colonial period), and Levels III, II, and I among them have been reported to belong to the colonial period (fig. 1, 2).<sup>2</sup>

The Lower City (Karum), which surrounds the mound especially from the north and east and whose borders are not fully known since it is under the modern Yeşilova Town settlement, was a settlement used during the colonial period, the heyday of the mound.<sup>3</sup> Considering the data obtained from the excavations carried out in a limited area<sup>4</sup> together with the data obtained from Kanesh Karum, a contemporary settlement, the Lower City was a living space consisting of

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1. Özgüç 1968.

2. Öztan 2012a.

3. Özgüç 1968.

4. Özgüç 1980.

neighborhoods with private houses inhabited not only by Assyrian merchants but also by local people.<sup>5</sup>

The Arıbaş Cemetery is located approximately 500 meters southeast of the mound and in the immediate vicinity of Ulurmak, which flows from the south of the mound. Four types of graves, including simple earth, pithos, urn, and simple cremation graves, were found in the cemetery, where cremation and inhumation burials occurred. It was indicated that 167 graves found in the cultural fill of the cemetery area were distributed in three different archaeological levels. It was stated that individuals were buried in the cremation tradition in all of the first phase graves, and they were buried in both cremation and inhumation traditions in other phases.<sup>6</sup>

Written documents belonging to the colonial period, during which Acemhöyük experienced its heyday, most of which were found in the city of Kültepe-Kaniş, provide information about the geography and place names of the period. Based on these documents, although there are different opinions as well as uncertainties<sup>7</sup> about the name of Acemhöyük during the colonial period,<sup>8</sup> recent studies have provided strong evidence that the city was Buruṣhattum (Akkadian), Puruṣhanda, Paraṣuhanda, Paraṣhunta (Hittite).<sup>9</sup>

### 1.2. Monumental Buildings of Acemhöyük Level III

With the excavations carried out since 1962, two large multi-room palaces that are interconnected and even complement each other, a service building, workshops, private houses, and kitchen buildings belonging to the colonial period were uncovered on the mound. All of these buildings underwent a severe fire. The Sarıkaya Palace is located in the southern part of the four elevations on the mound. The palace, which architecturally adheres to the tradition of Old Sumerian and Akkad palaces, was probably both the place of residence and administrative center of the king in Acemhöyük, the center of a local kingdom during its time.<sup>10</sup> It is considered that this monumental building, which covers an area of 5467 m<sup>2</sup> with its courtyard, has at least 50 rooms and two floors (fig. 3).<sup>11</sup> Özgüç claims that the earliest evidence of this great palace dates back to the 20th century BC, but according to the integrated tree ring radiocarbon high definition time frame studies carried out in recent years, the first construction date of the Sarıkaya Palace was dated to the beginning of the 18th century.<sup>12</sup>

The Hatipler Palace is located at the northern elevation. It was stated that this palace had two floors and at least 72 rooms. The most distinctive feature distinguishing it from the Sarıkaya Palace is that it does not have an inner courtyard. Its part opened by excavations covers an area of 3600 m<sup>2</sup>. Özgüç indicated that this palace was used as a warehouse after the construction of the Sarıkaya Palace, supported by 52 storage pithoi found there.<sup>13</sup>

5. Özgüç 1974; Özgüç 1984; Öztan 2007a.

6. Öztan 1998; Ekmen 2021.

7. Gander 2022, 35.

8. Barjamoviç 2011.

9. Garelli 1989; Özgüç 2015; Kuzuoğlu 2019.

10. Özgüç 2015.

11. Özgüç 1977.

12. Manning et. al. 2016; Manning et. al. 2020.

13. Özgüç 1973.

A building that was smaller than the Sarıkaya and Hatipler palaces and suffered a fire like them was uncovered in the west. This building is also contemporary with the palaces but was largely destroyed during the construction of the buildings of the Hellenistic period.<sup>14</sup>

In the northwest, hearths, kitchen buildings, and private houses belonging to the palaces were found. The diameters of the furnaces uncovered there vary between 2-2.5 meters. Öztan indicated that these kitchens served the palaces.<sup>15</sup> The houses found there show that they belonged to the notables of the city with the collective finds of silver ingots buried under the ground and especially with a unique ivory box.<sup>16</sup>

It is reported that the function of the building, which is located on the plain to the north of the Sarıkaya Palace, has not been fully determined yet, and it is referred to as a "Service Building" associated with the above-mentioned palaces. Although the construction materials of the building, whose 28 rooms were uncovered until 2012,<sup>17</sup> are mudbrick and wood like other monumental buildings, they have some differences in terms of the wood types and plan features.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.3. Levels II and I of Acemhöyük

During the excavations carried out in Acemhöyük until the present day, it was found that Level II had two phases, which were named a (latest) and b (earliest).<sup>19</sup> It was indicated that the earliest phase of this level was built in the same time period after the fire at Level III.<sup>20</sup> It was reported that the buildings of this phase were characterized by being small-scale and separate from each other and used as short-term shelters after the fire.<sup>21</sup> It was determined that the buildings of this phase were built without removing the fire debris belonging to Level III, very hastily, carelessly, and sometimes even by reusing the surviving walls of some rooms belonging to Level III (fig. 4). Özgüç described this type of building as squatting, built by survivors with the concern of looking for a place to live.<sup>22</sup> Other pieces of evidence that clearly demonstrated this were also found in the following years. A metal workshop, which is stated to have been built by people who survived the disaster using a wall of the building that withstood the fire, was uncovered right next to the Service Building in 2009.<sup>23</sup> Based on current information, there seems to be a more planned architectural order, including streets, in phase a of level II. In fact, Öztan, one of the persons carrying out excavations, mentioned the silos, furnaces, and streets belonging to this level in her reports (fig. 5).<sup>24</sup>

Although Level I was largely destroyed because it was very close to the surface, some remains of hearths, furnaces, paved floors, silos, and even canals and pipes understood that have been built for the drainage of wastewater under the floors of houses and streets, have been preserved.<sup>25</sup> The

14. Özgüç 1980.

15. Öztan 1995.

16. Öztan 1997.

17. Özkallı-Ekmen 2012.

18. Öztan 2007b.

19. Öztan 2012b.

20. Öztan et al. 2011.

21. Öztan 2008.

22. Özgüç 1968.

23. Öztan et al. 2011.

24. Öztan 2008; Öztan et al. 2011.

25. Özgüç 1968; Özgüç 1978.

excavations carried out in 2006 clearly showed that new architectural planning was made in the city during the time of Level I. It was indicated that the street fill, which was formed by hardening with broken pottery pieces and animal bones found in trench PA/40, extended to the west of the Sarıkaya Palace. It was stated that this street fill was in a form covering some of the buildings of Level II, a new city planning was made during the time of Level I after Level II, and there was a change in street locations.<sup>26</sup>

## 2. Some Finds on the Old Hittite Kingdom

### 2.1. Pottery

The archaeological material uncovered at Levels II and I and belonging to the times after the fire of palaces and other monumental buildings does not differ largely from those found at Level III of the city. Emre, who conducted a comprehensive study on the pottery of Acemhöyük, described the pottery repertoire used during Levels I, II, and III as "*the tradition called Hittite Ceramics*".<sup>27</sup> After this first evaluation made by Emre in 1968, the second detailed study was conducted by Türker as a doctoral thesis.<sup>28</sup>

Among the first results obtained by Emre, it was concluded that cream slip application was more common in the pottery of Level I of Acemhöyük. Moreover, it was determined that some vessel forms were specific to Level II and were not seen at Level III. One of these vessels is the pitchers with the spout on the side of the handle (fig. 6.5).<sup>29</sup> This information was also confirmed by Türker.<sup>30</sup> This type of pitcher with a side spout, pear body, red slip, and bright polish was found in a grave uncovered in the Lower City.<sup>31</sup>

Emre reported that the kantharoi found among Acemhöyük pottery were not observed at Level III but found at Level II, which was presented as proof of the diversity of forms between the levels.<sup>32</sup> Then, Türker added new types regarding these differences between the levels. Türker indicated that jugs with a spout strainer, ring-bottomed bowl with everted rim, pottery decorated with red cross,<sup>33</sup> jugs with a round rim, thin long neck, and bulging belly, and cups with a tapering body were the types used only at Level II of the settlement, unlike Level III (fig. 6). Furthermore, with the same study, it was understood that thin, long-necked jugs with a spout were used only at Levels II and I, while large vases with handles on the shoulders were used only at Level I. In this study, it was remarkable that a large number of close counterparts of Acemhöyük pottery were found in centers such as Boğazköy, Alaca Höyük, and Maşat Höyük, which were more prominent with Hittite culture.<sup>34</sup> Kulakoğlu, who evaluated the Ferzant finds, stated that the spouted jug has a flattened conical upper body and below the sharp carination the lower body tapers to the foot in a

26. Öztan 2008.

27. Emre 1968.

28. Türker 2008a.

29. Emre 1968.

30. Türker 2008a.

31. Özgüç 1968.

32. Emre 1968.

33. The presence of this bowl type, which was widely seen in the Eastern Mediterranean region at the end of the Early Bronze Age, in Acemhöyük level II may indicate that its context is open to debate. In fact, Türker argued that this bowl could be dated to a slightly later period than the examples unearthed in Troy and Cilicia. See Türker 2008b.

34. Türker 2008a.

concave curve, seen in fig. 6.6 here are Hittite jugs.<sup>35</sup> According to convincing new interpretations, similar beaked jugs were also found in İnandıktepe,<sup>36</sup> a large agricultural estate, and dated to the late 16th century, during the Telipinu period.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, it was indicated that the funnel and spherical body pithos uncovered from Level II of Acemhöyük were unknown forms from the city of Kültepe/Kaniş, which provides most of what we know about the pottery repertoire of the colonial period. The fact that the closest counterpart of the relevant funnel is known from the level of Tarsus Gözlükule, parallel to the Old Hittite Kingdom and the Hittite level of Alaca Höyük. And the exact counterpart of the spherical body pithos that was also found in Alaca Höyük<sup>38</sup> may provide evidence that the pithoi of Acemhöyük level II were produced mostly in the Hittite tradition.

Some differences on the pottery between levels III and II of Acemhöyük and a few details thought to be related to Hittite traditions in the pottery unearthed at level II are listed above. One could easily say that the data presented here are not obvious enough to catch the eye at a glance. The reason for this is that the pottery found in the fillings, which is considered to be Hittite pottery or defined as Hittite culture, cannot be clearly distinguished from the pottery of the previous colonial period.<sup>39</sup> Schoop explained this situation by the fact that Hittite pottery types were very long-lived and their shapes evolved slowly or, sometimes, not at all. He stated that we were not facing a fashion change or a typological shift but rather still unexplained changes in the economic, nutritional, or social spheres.<sup>40</sup> Mielke, on the other hand, stated that Hittite ceramics were the result of the development process of Central Anatolian pottery in the 2nd millennium BC and before.<sup>41</sup>

Another reason for possible doubts about the proposition presented here is that the contexts of excavations such as Alişar and Alaca Höyük carried out in the past years are not very reliable. However, the results of excavations with absolute dates and detailed documentation have also shown that there is a continuity in pottery. It has been stated that there is no significant difference in the pottery at the level belonging to the transitional period, which was discovered during the excavations carried out in the great temple area in Boğazköy in recent years and evaluated as "Zwischenphase" by Schachner.<sup>42</sup> However, Schoop made a small but very important contribution to the subject with his study by supporting small differences between the levels of the pottery found in Boğazköy with quantitative data. It is not currently possible to provide quantitative data for Acemhöyük. However, in light of some details highlighted by Schoop, the data on Acemhöyük can also be supported. Schoop determined that the shallow bowls used during the 2nd millennium BC, with a slightly inverted rim and a hemispherical body, were the earliest form, and that those with a slightly shallower profile, with a characteristic wedge-like strengthening on the interior of the rim, and another variant of this type, those with a pointed rim, appeared with the beginning of the Hittite period.<sup>43</sup> A red-slipped bowl of the type in question was unearthed at level II in the northwestern

35. Kulakoğlu 1996.

36. Özgüç stated that the building in İnandıktepe was a temple and dated to the middle of Hattusili I' reign. See Özgüç 1988; Balkan 1973.

37. Mielke 2006. Glatz 2020. For the details of land grant found on the site see Rüster et. al. 2012.

38. Türker 2008a.

39. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer(s) who provided a detailed reference list on the subject.

40. Schoop 2006.

41. Mielke 2017.

42. Schachner 2020.

43. Schoop 2011.

area of Acemhöyük and in the late phase of Arıbaş Cemetery (fig. 6-7,8). A similar detail was also presented for cooking pots. Schoop stated that the rims of the cooking pots used in the colonial period were thickened inward according to the Early Bronze Age traditions and thickened outward in the Hittite period.<sup>44</sup> A cooking pot of this type belonging to level II was found in the area where Acemhöyük Hatıpler Palace is located (fig 6-9). Schoop stated that the vases with outward-curving rims, of which many examples we know from the city of Kanesh in the colonial period, became horizontally outward-sloping in the Hittite Age.<sup>45</sup> A vase of this type was found in the late phase of Arıbaş Cemetery (fig 6-10). The differences here consist only of details, as stated above, and most of the Hittite pottery repertoire does not differ from the colonial period. Mielke stated that at first, not much changed in pottery when the Hittites established a large state, but a significant change, including a decrease in the variety of shapes and quality of pots, occurred in the late 16th century BC.<sup>46</sup>

## 2.2. Metals

The metal objects uncovered in Acemhöyük during the excavations carried out between 1962 and 2010 were examined by the author of this article within the scope of her doctoral thesis. Two prominent finds among them provide important clues about the settlement of the Old Hittite Kingdom in Acemhöyük.

The needle found at Level II of grid-square UA/ 42 in 1990 is called mid-mounted, top-mounted, or mounted in the literature. This type of needles, characterized by a hollow in the middle of the head, started to be used for the first time in the Old Hittite Kingdom in Anatolia. Except for the sample(s) uncovered in Boğazköy, the capital of the relevant period, the samples found in Kaman-Kalehöyük, Alaca Höyük, and Vezirköprü-Oymağaç were also found at the levels belonging to the Hittite Kingdom (fig. 7).<sup>47</sup>

The second piece of evidence in this direction is the stemmed arrowhead with a willow leaf shape, which was found in the fill of Level II during the excavations carried out in the north of the mound in 1974. These types of arrowheads were observed and widespread in Anatolia in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC. The closest counterparts are known from Boğazköy, Alaca Höyük, Fraktin, and Alişar. The heads belonging to Boğazköy Büyükkale Level IVc, IVb and III are similar to the arrowhead of Acemhöyük.<sup>48</sup> These levels date from the 17th century onwards in the new chronological order.<sup>49</sup> The arrowhead found during the excavations in Alişar belongs to Level II. Alaca Höyük and Fraktin samples dated to the Hittite Kingdom are the representatives of the same type. From these types of arrowheads found at Level IIIb of the Kaman-Kalehöyük excavations in recent years, the samples found in Beycesultan in the Lakes Region, Yumuktepe (Late Bronze Age) and Tell Açıana Level III in the south are known (fig. 8).<sup>50</sup>

44. Schoop 2011.

45. Schoop 2011.

46. Mielke 2017.

47. Ekmen 2013.

48. Boehmer 1972, 107.

49. Strupler 2016, Table 1.2.

50. Özkallı-Ekmen 2012.

### 2.3. *Glyptic*

In the book published by Özgüç in 2015, the first person carrying out excavations at Acemhöyük, the seals and bullae, most of which were found in room 6 of the Sarıkaya Palace, were evaluated in detail, and accurate opinions about the construction date and usage period of the palace were presented. In this study, Özgüç revealed that the palace was used from the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC until the middle of the 17th century BC with all the evidence, and she listed the parallels of the palace with Kanesh Karum Levels II and Ib. The point that should be especially noted here is the bulla stamped with the omega stamp seal, which shows that the palace was used until the 17th century BC. Özgüç also considered the omega ( $\Omega$ ) depicted seals (fig. 9) dating to the 17th century BC as a harbinger of the end of Level Ib for the city of Kültepe Kaniş.<sup>51</sup> Boehmer dated these seals between Kaniş-Karum Ib and Hattušili.<sup>52</sup>

In the Arıbaş cemetery discussed within the scope of a doctoral thesis by H. Ekmen in 2012, a stamp seal with the omega sign made of faience was uncovered. The seal, a burial gift to grave no. 1996/M-24, has the omega ( $\Omega$ ) sign on two monkeys and a rabbit. Since the similar and different aspects of the seal with a round top, a grooved part on the base, an oval face, and a thread hole were examined by Ekmen in detail with the samples found in and outside Anatolia, they will not be repeated here.<sup>53</sup>

The similar counterparts of this type of seals found in Gordion<sup>54</sup> and Çavlum<sup>55</sup> were dated to the Old Hittite Kingdom.<sup>56</sup>

### 2.4. *Data on Burial Customs of the Arıbaş Cemetery*

The Arıbaş Cemetery, located in the southeast of the city, started to be excavated in 1993.<sup>57</sup> Of 167 graves uncovered, there are simple earth, pithos, urn, and simple cremation grave types. There were two types of burial customs: inhumation and cremation. Although urn and cremation burials were found at every level in the cemetery where three different phases were found, most of the urns, the most common type of grave, were found at Level I. Inhumation burials were observed only at Levels II and III, and only the cremation tradition was preferred in phase I. In a relevant article published in 2021, the differences seen in both grave types and burial customs between the phases were presented in a clear and understandable way with graphics.<sup>58</sup> A table in this study shows that most of the grave gifts found in the cemetery belong to phase I.

Based on the pottery and small finds found in the cemetery, it was indicated that the cemetery started to be used in a contemporary period with the building Level III, where the monumental palaces of the city were built, and was used until the middle of the 17th century BC.<sup>59</sup> The same

51. Özgüç 2015.

52. Boehmer 1989.

53. Ekmen 2012a; Ekmen 2021.

54. Dusinger 2005.

55. Bilgen 2005.

56. Speaking of these chronological parallels, the depiction of a god engraved on a gold foil with Hittite style features, which was found in the ruins of Kaniş Karumu Level Ib in 2006, should also be remembered (Kulakoğlu 2008). This depiction of a god once again indicates that the Hittite art developed from the art of the colonial period, which we know from Kültepe, and the city of Kaniş was inhabited in a parallel period with the Old Hittite Kingdom. Moreover, Emre indicated in 1999 that Karum Ia level was related to Hattusili I, based on local pottery samples such as the Ferzant-type bowls uncovered in Kaniş Karum. See Emre 1999.

57. Öztan 1998.

58. Ekmen 2021.

59. Öztan 1998; Ekmen 2021.

dates are valid for the Ayaş-Ilıca cemetery<sup>60</sup> and the Gordion<sup>61</sup> and Osmanlıyısı<sup>62</sup> cemeteries known as "*Hittite*".

### 3. Conclusion

The Hittites, who succeeded in establishing a central authority in Central Anatolia in the middle of the 17th century BC, were a state that attempted to have a say outside the core regions where the Kızılırmak River curved. With the Telipinu Edict, we have limited information about the political developments of the Hittites during their establishment.<sup>63</sup> According to this edict, Labarna, a king of the early Old Hittite period, predecessor of Hattušili I, has conquered Puruṣhanda and assigned to his son.<sup>64</sup> With regard to localization studies on Acemhöyük, Özgüç, the person carrying out excavations, thought that Puruṣhanda was Acemhöyük, like Garelli<sup>65</sup> and many other researchers.<sup>66</sup> From this point of view, Özgüç also evaluated the findings on dating found in the palace and indicated that the monumental buildings of Acemhöyük were destroyed during the reign of Hattusili I. In other words, she stated that the Sarıkaya Palace was used until the mid-17th century BC.<sup>67</sup>

When all these data are evaluated collectively, it is revealed that the settlements at Levels II and I of Acemhöyük, which were continuously inhabited after Level III, chronologically belong to the Hattusili period, in other words, the Old Hittite Kingdom and later.

Minor differences in the pottery assemblages of Acemhöyük Levels I-II and III are significant as they show that the pottery fashion or preferences changed slightly with the end of the colonial period occupation in the settlement.

Immediately after the Acemhöyük Level III fire, life in the settlement continued until the end of Level I. Since we do not have absolute dates, we do not yet know when Level I ended. However, we can easily say that the architecture of Level II, which has the appearance of a rural settlement or village far from a large commercial city, lacks monumental buildings, and the pottery is far from the magnificence of the previous level and only meets daily needs.<sup>68</sup> Those similar to human traces from the immediate aftermath of the fire detected in phase b of Level II were also detected during excavations in Boğazköy great temple area. Schachner indicated that a colonial period building under the temple was destroyed by fire and this area continued to be used after the city was conquered by Anitta in 1748-1730 BC at the earliest, and that historically there was no hiatus between the colonial period and the Hittite Age.<sup>69</sup> There is a similar continuity in phase b of Level II in Acemhöyük, and there was no interruption of settlement thereafter in phase IIa and Level I.

The bronze needles and arrowheads clearly indicate that the Hittite trend was active at level II of the city. Moreover, seals with omega depictions and seal bullae with omega prints appear as the materials directly related to the Hittite culture in the settlement. According to a detail on the pottery

60. Orthmann 1967.

61. Mellink 1956.

62. Bittel et al. 1958.

63. Hofmann 1984.

64. Forlanini 2017b.

65. Garelli 1989.

66. Mellaart 1982; Kawakami 2006; Forlanini 2017a.

67. Özgüç 2015.

68. Türker 2008a

69. Schachner 2020.



emphasized by Emre, the cream slip application was excessive at Level I. This is another indication that the inhabitants of Level I followed the Hittite trend in producing pottery. Although Fischer, who studied Boğazköy Hittite pottery, stated that the cream slip application emerged during the Karum period of Boğazköy, he emphasized that it became widespread during the Old Hittite and Imperial periods.<sup>70</sup> The predominance of this tradition at Level I of Acemhöyük shows that it had its share of the Hittite trend.

The pieces of bathroom vessels found on the floor of a house at Level II of Acemhöyük also bear traces of the Hittite art of depiction. The pieces of vessels, referred to as "the original work of the Old Hittite art of painting" by Özgüç, were also made with paint on a cream slip. The hunting scene, which is the most popular element of the Hittite art, draws attention in the depiction on it, and the hunter in this scene with his short skirt is a form we know from Hittite iconography.<sup>71</sup> The fishing scene here has a narrative description with details of the place and the subject. However, the vessels decorated with these types of figures contain singular and independent figures in contrast to the narration in the colonial period. Another piece of evidence showing the iconographic effects of the Hittite culture in the city is the seal found in the fire debris of the Sarıkaya Palace.<sup>72</sup> The dress of the figure here is similar to the dress of the acrobat figures on the relief vase found in İnandıktepe.

Considering the findings in the Arıbaş cemetery, the presence of a three-stage burial system in the cemetery, which was started to be used in the same period as Level III of the mound, roughly indicates a chronological stratification. Furthermore, the striking differences between the phases in terms of burial types, burial customs, and the number and variety of burial gifts<sup>73</sup> are indicative of some cultural changes. The most significant result here is that only the cremation tradition was preferred in phase I. According to some researchers, the emergence of the tradition of cremation in a particular cultural region indicates the existence of foreign cultural groups that came to that region later on and is generally associated with the migrations of Indo-European tribes.<sup>74</sup> Bienkowski indicated that the beginning of the cremation tradition in a region was too complex to be explained by the arrival of foreign communities in the region alone.<sup>75</sup> In different studies on this subject, the relationship between cremation and religion,<sup>76</sup> economy<sup>77</sup> or social scale/gender<sup>78</sup> has been emphasized. Seeher pointed out that cremation and inhumation were used together in Konya-Karahöyük, Gordion, Yanarlar, Osmanlı, Ilica and Sariket cemeteries. He stated that the occurrence of these two forms of burial in the same cemetery contradicts the assumption that different cultures and religious thoughts emerged, and he explained this situation with the social status differences within the group.<sup>79</sup> In conclusion, the fact that there are only cremation burials at Level I of the Arıbaş cemetery can be considered an indicator of a cultural, economic or, perhaps, political change more than an indicator of social status.

70. Fischer 1963.

71. Özgüç 1968.

72. Öztan 2020.

73. Ekmen 2021.

74. Ekmen 2012.

75. Bienkowski 1982.

76. Binford 1971; Erdal 2017.

77. Carr 1995.

78. Bruck 2014.

79. Seeher 2015.

The region, which was mentioned as the lower country in the texts of the Hittites, who established a powerful empire in Anatolia in the 2nd millennium BC, is located in the south of the Hittite core region, namely, Boğazköy and its surroundings. Many researchers think that the Lower Country is located in the region between the Konya Plain and Lake Tuz.<sup>80</sup> Acemhöyük is one of the first places that come to mind when looking at the mounds inhabited in the 2nd millennium BC in the Lower Country, namely Lake Tuz and its surroundings.

The above-mentioned findings found in Acemhöyük in the Lower Country confirm that this city was a center settled during the Old Hittite Kingdom. While saying this, our aim is not to discuss whether the human communities living at Levels II and I of Acemhöyük were under the political domination of the Hittites. Because our information on the territorial scope of the Hittite, and the degree of control it had exercised over the lands during the Old Kingdom is insufficient.<sup>81</sup> It should be emphasized that Levels II and I of Acemhöyük should be mentioned as the Hittite Age levels, not the level of the colonial period, based on the Hittite cultural traces at these levels (table 1). Although Acemhöyük lost its former glory after its monumental buildings were destroyed by fire, the findings and evaluations listed above are remarkable in terms of creating the reflections of Hittite culture in this city in the Lower Country, which now has a provincial appearance.

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Absolute Dates from Written Sources (BC)	Kültepe/ Kanesh Karum	Acemhöyük / Purushanda ?	Contemporary Kings
1927	II	III	ERİŞUM I of Assyria NARAM SIN of Assyria
1836	Hiatus		
1835 -1833/1832	Ib		ŠAMŠI ADAD of Assyria
1719	Ia	III	HAMMURABI of Babylon
	End of city		ŠAMSU ILUNA of Babylon HATTUŠILI I of Hittite
1650		II	
?		I	

Old Assyrian Colony Period  
 Old Hittite Kingdom

Table 1. Comparative Chronology Chart of Acemhöyük and Kültepe/ Kanesh Karum



Figure 1. Google Earth photo of Acmehöyük and modern Yeşilova



Figure 2. Map showing Acmehöyük





Figure 3. Sarıkaya Palace and volcanic Hasan mountain

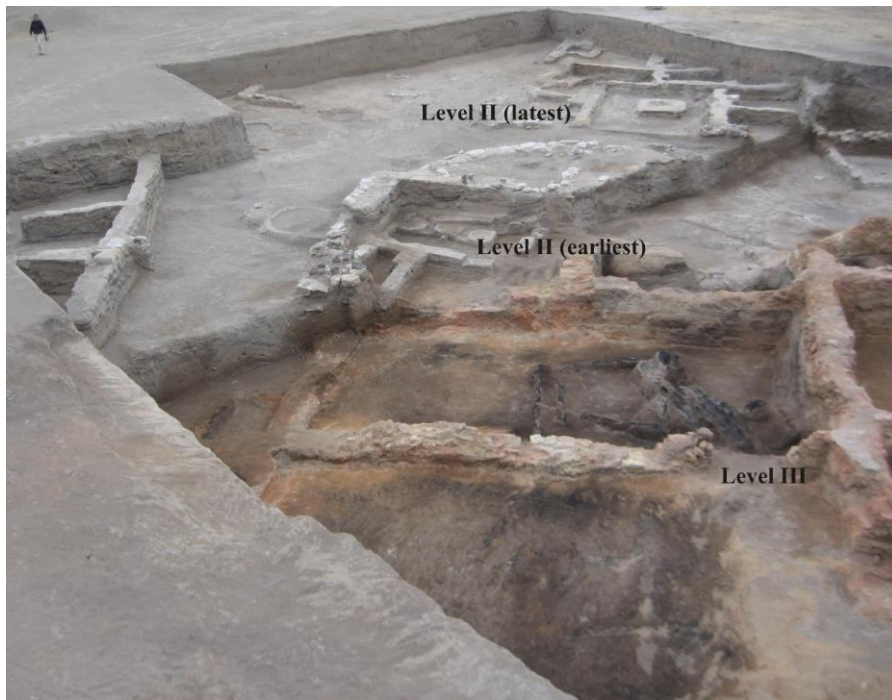


Figure 4. Early (b) and late phase (a) of Level II and Level III (Öztan 2008)

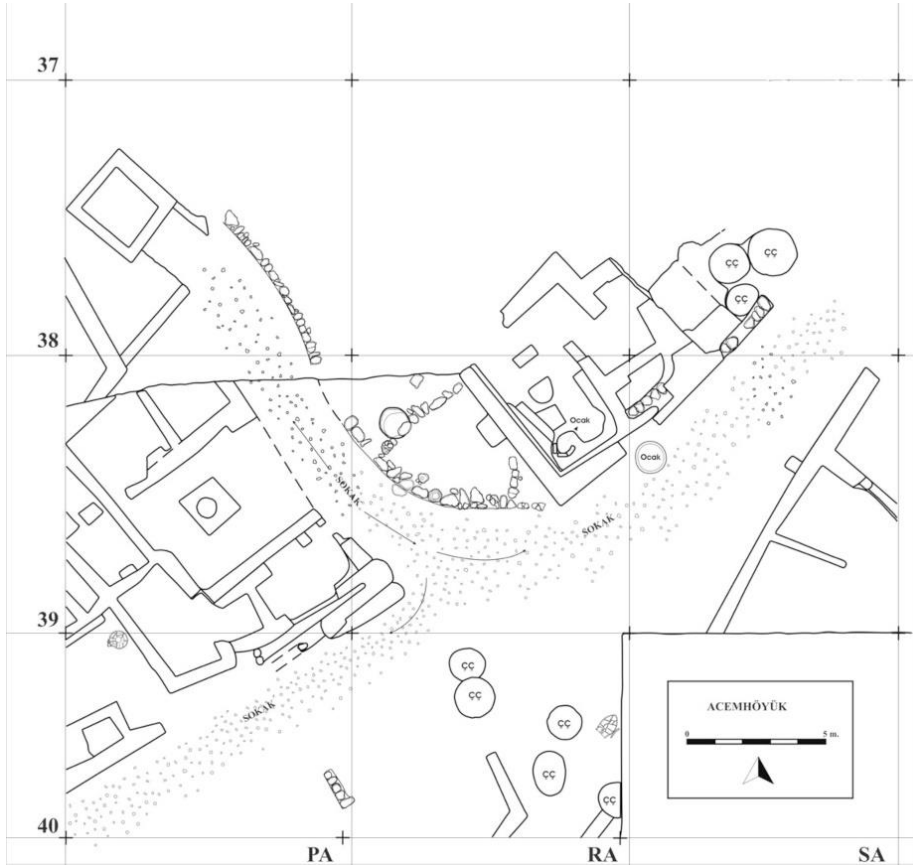


Figure 5. Plan of Level II (Öztan 2008)

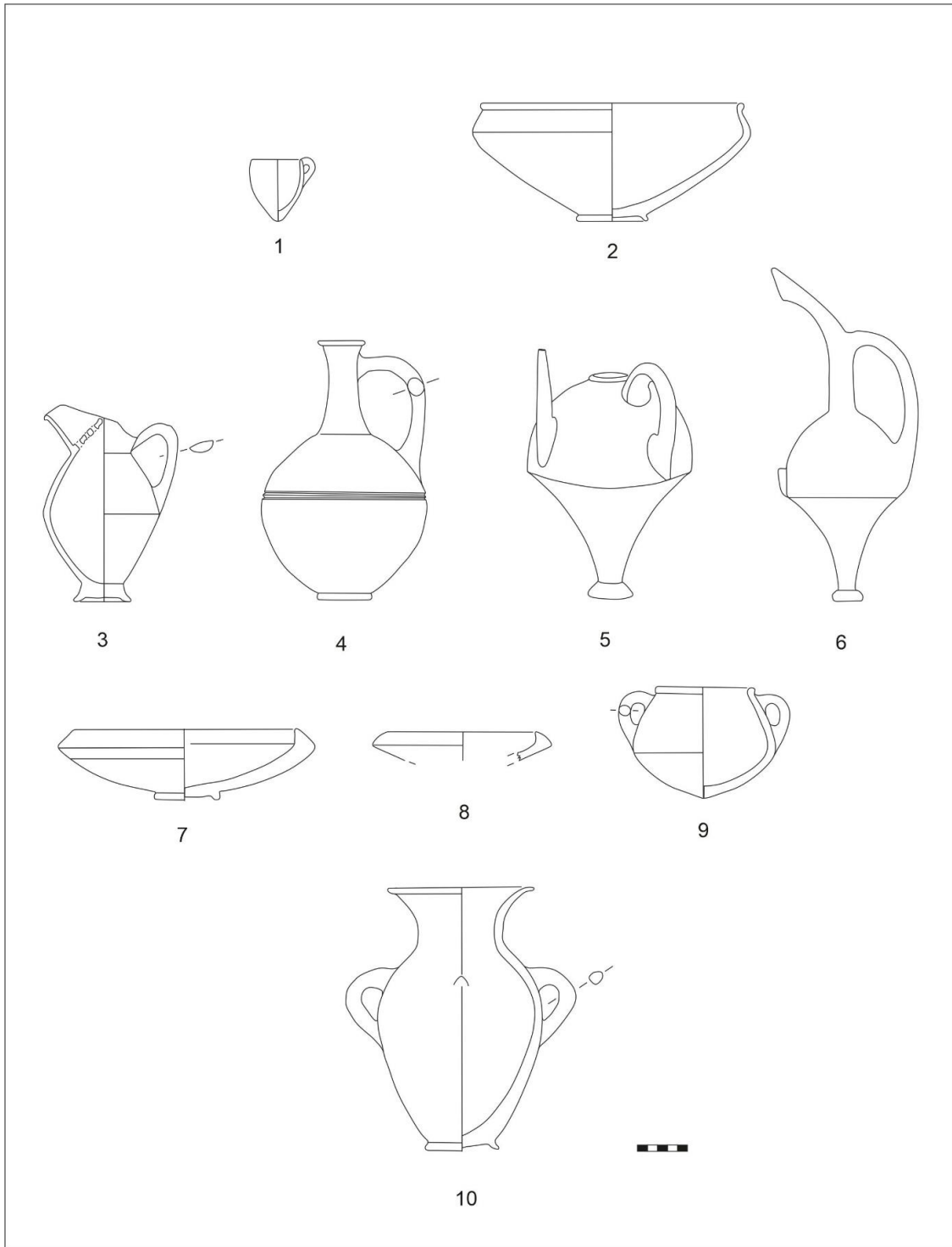


Figure 6. Vessel types related to the Hittite Age from Level II and Aribaş Cemetery phase I (Türker 2008a, Ekmen 2012b)

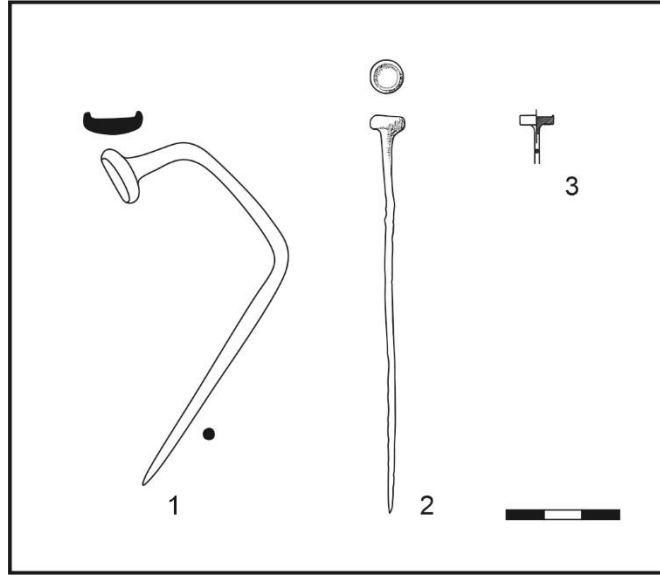


Figure 7. Top Mounted Needles: 1. Acemhöyük (Ekmen 2013), 2. Boğazköy (Boehmer 1972), 3. Alaca Höyük (Koşay-Akok 1966)

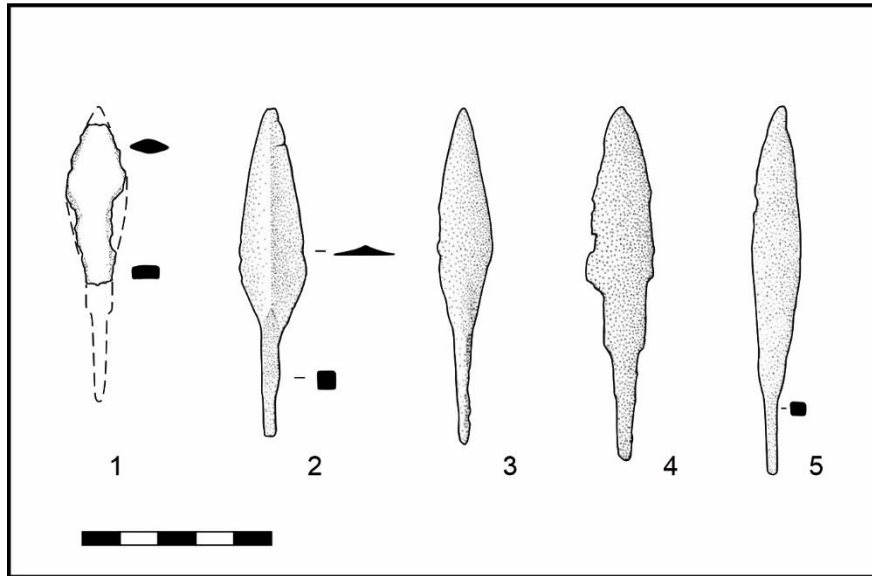


Figure 8. Willow Leaf Shaped Arrowheads: 1. Acemhöyük (Özkalalı-Ekmen 2012), 2. Boğazköy, 3. Alişar, 4. Fraktin, 5. Alaca Höyük (Erkanal 1977)

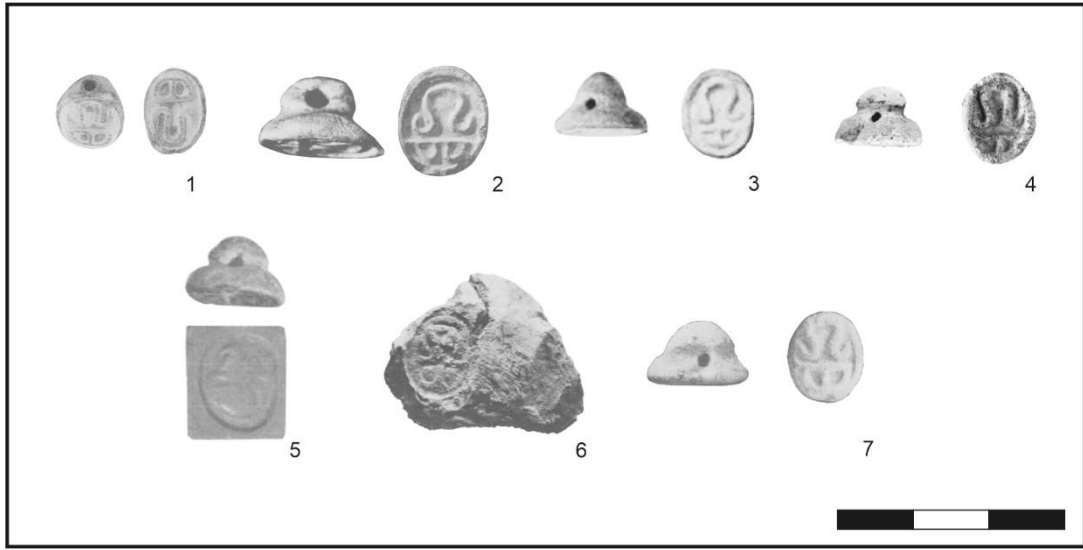


Figure 9. Omega Depicted Stamp Seals and Bulla: 1. Çavlum (Bilgen 2005), 2. Kanesh Karum (Özgüç 1986), 3. Alişar (von der Osten 1937), 4. Gordion (Dusinberre 2005), 5-6. Acemhöyük (Tezcan 1958; Özgüç 1986), 7. Karahöyük (Alp 1994)