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ARAM KOSYAN: The hittite kingdom (Political history). Yerevan, “Copy Print” publishing house, 2022, 252 pages*.

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The history of the Hittite state is considered one of the most remarkable pages in the history of Near East in the XVII–XIII centuries BC. The state



founded by the Indo-European Hittites (Nesians) in the east of Asia Minor and in the west of the Armenian Highland soon included most of the territories of Asia Minor and became one of the most powerful states in the region. However, Asia Minor was not enough for the Hittites. Their aspirations also began to spread to the countries of the Aegean Sea basin, Syria, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia and the Armenian Highland. In the XIV century BC it already began to divide the region into spheres of influence together with other “great powers” of the Near East.

The legacy of the Hittite state (Hatti) still draws the attention of the specialists studying the history, culture, religion, linguistics and other issues of the Near East in the II millennium BC. Hittite written sources come to supplement the Mesopotamian and Egyptian sources and are invaluable for reconstructing the complete picture of the history of the given period.

The written sources of the Hittite state are also invaluable for studying the history of the Armenian Highland II millennium BC. There are unique descriptions of many historical events, personal names, toponyms and theonyms that allow us to reconstruct the history of the Armenian Highland of the given period.

In this regard, the book “The Hittite Kingdom (political history)” by Aram Kosyan, Doctor of Sciences (History), Professor, Head of the Department of Ancient Orient of the Institute of Oriental Studies of NAS RA, published at the recommendation of the Scientific Council of the Institute, is of great importance for Armenian historiography.

Since the 20s of the previous century, Armenian historians realized the importance of Hittite sources for our history and turned their attention in that direction as well. Many Armenian historians have conducted research in

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various fields of Hittite studies, but it is the first time that a complete version of the political history of the Hittite kingdom has been presented in Armenian. Since the 80s of the previous century, Aram Kosyan has carried out research in the field of Hittite studies and over the years has become one of the well-known experts in that field. His scientific authority is recognized not only in Armenia, but also abroad. It is very important to emphasize that Professor Kosyan has also created a school of Hittite studies in Armenia and is still developing and expanding it¹.

The book “The Hittite Kingdom (political history)” consists of four chapters. The introduction depicts the geographical environment in which the Hittite kingdom formed and developed. The part on the population of Asia Minor is also an important sub-chapter. It depicts the multi-ethnic image of Asia Minor in the III–II millennia BC. It shows the movements in the region of the peoples belonging to the Indo-European and other language families. Besides, it presents the views prevailing nowadays in the field of Hittite studies on the possible movements of the Hittites and their kindred Luwians, Palaians and the initial areas they settled in, as well as the author’s own approaches to these complex issues.

The first chapter of the work presents the Hittite written and archaeological sources that are the basis for the study of the history of the Hittite civilization. It also gives a brief history of the study of Hittite cuneiform sources and, in general, the emergence and development of Hittite studies. Armenian specialists who contributed to the given field were also valued. In that sense, of course, academician Grigor Ghapantsyan’s contribution and especially his monumental work “Hayasa - the Cradle of Armenians” are invaluable². Academician Gevorg Jahukyan’s great contribution to the study of relations and connections between Armenian and Hittite languages was also shown³.

A. Kosyan also referred to the “Cappadocian” sources of the period of the trading colonies of Assur. Those sources are also invaluable for the history of Asia Minor of the XX–XVIII centuries BC and the prehistory of the Hittite state. They are mainly about the activities of Assyrian merchants in the trading centers founded in different cities of Asia Minor. The center of these trading colonies was the city of Kanesh or Nesa, which was also important for the early history of the Hittites⁴.

¹ On these and other issues see *Ռ. Ղազարյան. Խեթագիտությունը Հայաստանում. անցյալ, ներկա և ապագա. – Հայագիտությունը և արդի ժամանակաշրջանի մարտահրավերները: Հայագիտական միջազգային երկրորդ Համաժողով, 17–19 հոկտեմբերի, 2013 թ., զեկուցումների ժողովածու, Երևան, 2014, էջ 124–127:*

² Гр. Капанцян. Хайаса-колыбель армян. Ереван, 1948.

³ Գ. Ջառնկյան. Հայոց լեզվի պատմություն. նախագրային ժամանակաշրջան, Երևան, 1987:

⁴ On some questions about the history of the city of Kanesh and the prehistory of the Hittite state, see R. Ghazaryan, Administrative and political system and

The second chapter of the work presents the history of Asia Minor at the beginning of the II millennium BC, the period of the so-called Assyrian trading colonies. The presentation of the history of the cities of Kussara, Nesa and Hattusa is particularly important here. Those cities played an important role in the process of the establishment of the Hittite kingdom and the emergence of early statehood. At the beginning of the history of the Old Kingdom, the Hittites moved their capital to Hattusa, which remained their main capital for centuries to come.

The next, third chapter, presents the history of the Old Hittite Kingdom. This phase of the history of the Hittite statehood, unlike the New Kingdom, lacks written sources. Sometimes it is difficult to accurately restore the logic of the events that took place during the reign of this or that Hittite king, because the sources are sometimes missing. However, it should be noted that within the limits of the current Hittite studies, on the basis of his own thoughts and conclusions, the author presents this least studied period of the Hittite history in a well-founded manner. The activities of the kings of the period of the Old Kingdom, the military-and-political events of the region, internal developments, etc. are presented in the chapter.

In the fourth chapter of his work A. Kosyan depicts the history of the New Kingdom, which is the most extensively covered period of the Hittite history and is of great importance for the history of the Armenian Highland, and is full of important events. This is the period when the Hittite Empire stretching from the west of the Armenian Highland to the shores of the Aegean Sea, from the Pontic Mountains to southern Syria and northern Mesopotamia. The chapter describes the eventful history of the period of reign of the Hittite kings Tudḫaliya II, Arnuwanda I, Tudḫaliya III, Suppiluliuma II, Arnuwanda II, Mursili II, Muwatalli II, Mursili III, Ḫattusili III, Tudḫaliya IV, Arnuwanda III and Suppiluliuma II. A special place is given to the activities of Suppiluliuma I, the true founder of the Hittite Empire. He managed not only to restore the rather weakened state, but also to make it the most powerful state in the Near East. The sources written during the reign of Suppiluliuma I's son Mursili II are particularly important for Hittite historiography. They describe not only the period of reign of that king, but also that of his predecessors. The chapter also presents the Hittite-Egyptian treaty of 1259 BC (signed between Ḫattusili III and Ramesses II), which occupies a unique place in the history of the Near East and international relations in general. The Treaty of "Eternal Peace and Friendship" brought a legal settlement in the relations between the two Empires and was strengthened by the establishment of dynastic relations between the two dynasties.

The last sub-chapter of the the fourth chapter depicts the history of the fall of the Hittite kingdom. The theory about the political instability caused by famine and the change in natural climatic conditions and population

economy of the Kingdom of Kanesh. – "Bulletin of the Institute of Oriental Studies", 2022, № II/2, pp. 13–24.

movement as a result of the division of the state was put forward and substantiated. In this regard, the theories previously based only on the intervention of external forces are now largely rejected and Hittitologists mainly try to find the reasons for the fall and division of the Hittite kingdom in internal developments. From the XII century BC the Hittite state traditions continued mainly in the southeast of Asia Minor, in the southwest of the Armenian Highland and in the north of Syria. In part, these areas coincide with the geographical area of the formation of the Hittite state traditions, the Kussara-Nesa region. Thus, in late XIII century and early XII century, as a result of the “Near Eastern crisis”⁵, one of the most important Bronze Age powers of the Near East experienced a decline, as a result of which the Hittite written tradition was also interrupted.

An extensive list of Hittological studies and lists of personal names and toponyms and maps in Armenian (compiled by Dr. Yervand Grekian) are also attached to this valuable work.

In the book, a significant place is also given to the history of the political and spiritual-and-cultural interactions of the ancient societies and states of Asia Minor and its neighboring Armenian Highland. The focus of those relations was mainly the western part of the Armenian Highland, mainly the historical territories of Armenia Minor, Upper Armenia, Tsopk, Turuberan, Aghdznik. According to Hittite and other sources, Ḫayasa-Azzi, Isuwa, Alzi and other states existed there in the II millennium BC. In that region there were also a number of cities and regions of great importance for the history of the Hittite kingdom, namely Upper Land, Tegarama, Maldiya, Samuḫa, Sarissa, Kummaha, etc.

It should also be noted that the work is useful for those studying the history of the Near East of the II millennium BC, because it presents the complete picture of relations that were formed between Hatti and the countries near or far from it (Egypt, Mittani, Assyria, Babylonia, Ahḫiyawa, Arzawa, Isuwa, Hayasa, Alzi, etc.). The work is also important for those studying the history of the Ancient Orient, as well as the history of the Armenian Highland.

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⁵ On the “Middle Eastern Crisis” see Ա. Քոսյան. Մ. Թ. ա. XII դարի մերձավորարևելյան ճգնաժամը և Հայկական լեռնաշխարհը, Երևան, 1999: