

Foreword

This volume originates from a research project that started a few years ago, which was funded within the PRIN program *Writing Uses: Transmission of Knowledge, Administrative Practices and Political Control in Anatolian and Syro-Anatolian Polities in the 2nd and 1st Millennium BCE*. The project involved ‘research units’ from different Italian universities (Torino, Pavia, Bologna, Firenze, Napoli - Suor Orsola Benincasa) and their work was designed in such a way that continuous interaction between the participants could be established, to exploit the different experiences and skills. The study of Hittite society from a social, administrative and economic point of view is especially difficult due to the lack of documentation relating to the private sphere, unlike other regions of the ancient Near East, where a large number of these type of documents is preserved. The complexity of the issues and the special documentary situation of ancient Anatolia therefore required frequent exchanges of ideas and proposals.

Given that since the beginning of 2020 it has been very difficult to implement this intense program of meetings and discussions, if not ‘remotely’ (but with less chance of externalization), we put forward the proposal of creating a collective volume which combines some of the results achieved by the different research units.

The title of this collective volume is taken from the second part of the title of the research project and it offers an updated picture of the different types of investigations – philological, historical and archaeological – about the Hittite and post-Hittite administration in Anatolia and Syria. Other publications related to this topic, the use of writings for administrative purposes, the problems connected with the disappearance of the cuneiform script in Anatolia at the end of the Bronze Age, or the revival of the Anatolian hieroglyphic script in south-central Anatolia during the Iron Age are published (or are in print) elsewhere by members of the different units.

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